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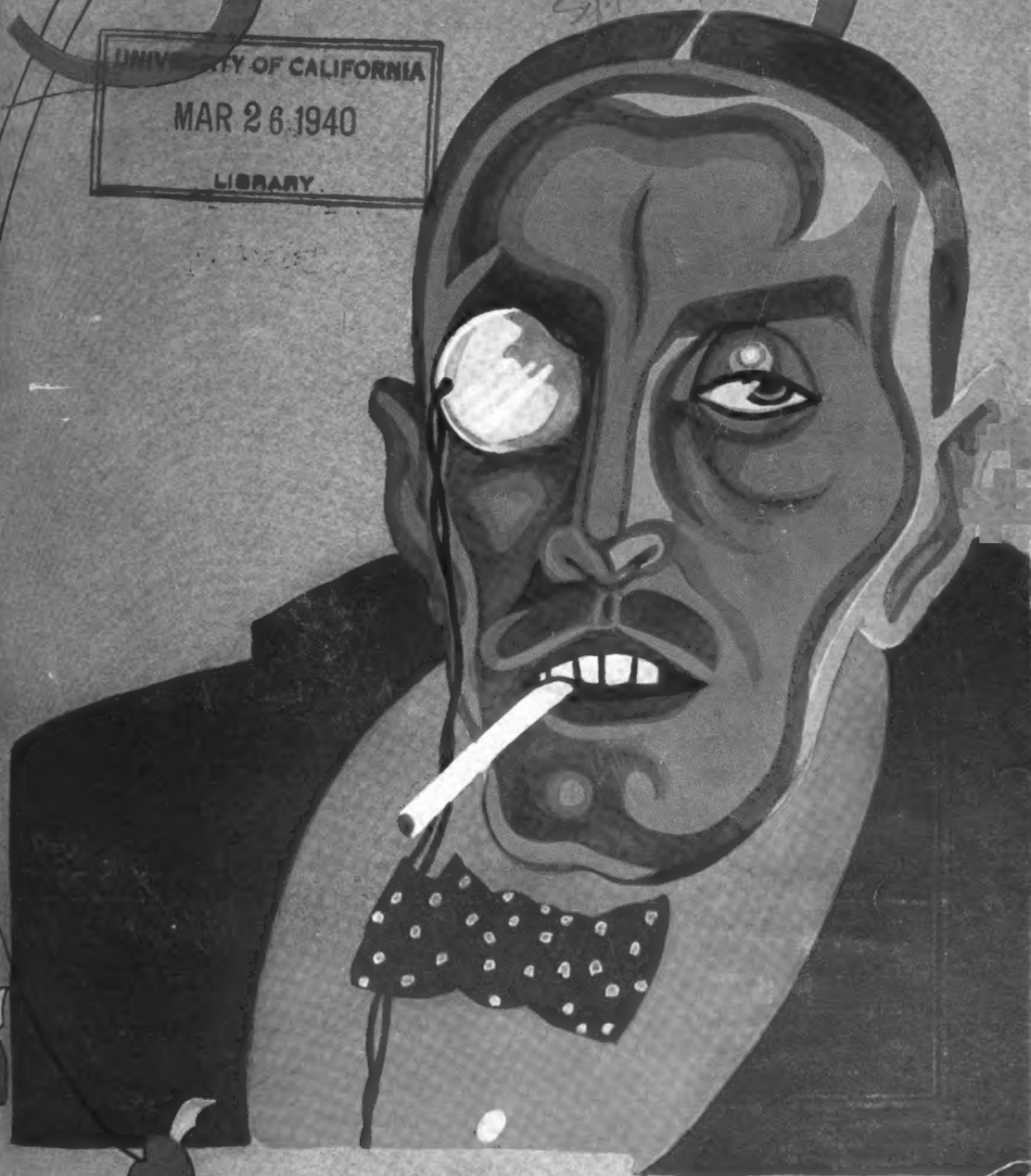
*Edited by
George Jean Nathan
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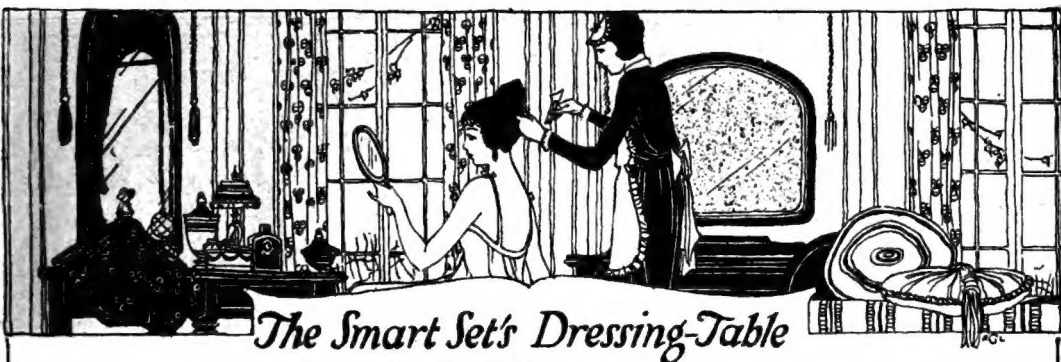
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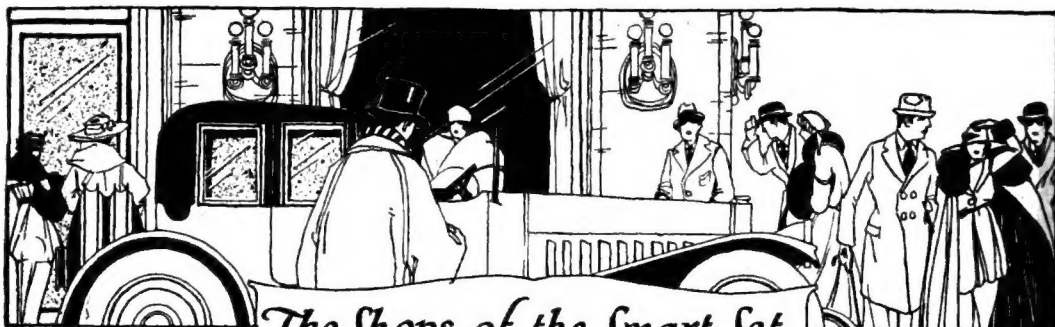
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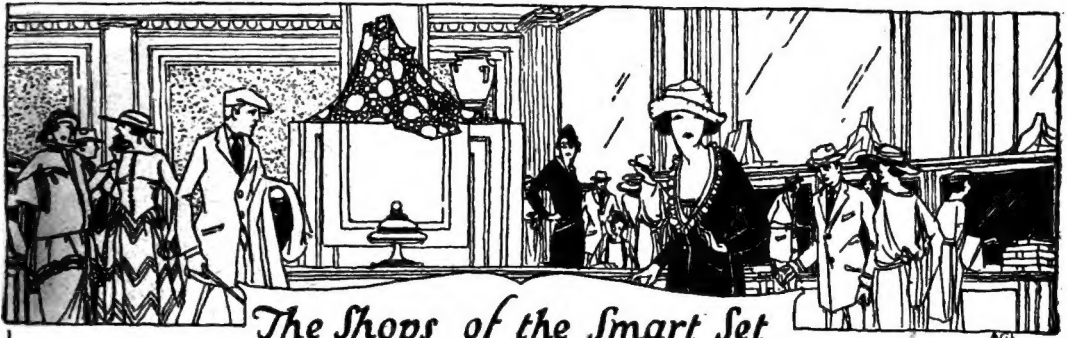
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Manuscripts must be addressed, "Editors of THE SMART SET"

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Issued Monthly by the Smart Set Company, Inc., 25 West 45th Street, New York

Entered as second class matter, March 27, 1900, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879

Printed in U. S. A.

Eltinge F. Warner, President and Treasurer

George Jean Nathan, Secretary

Western Advertising Office, Wrigley Building, Chicago, Ill.

The Smart Set is published in England at 265, Strand, London, W. C. 2.

Red Stars of the Night

By Lizette Woodworth Reese

RED stars of the night
White flowers of the dawn,
My young golden lover
Has left me and gone.

From the songs on the shelf,
From the cloak gray as dew,
From the herbs in the garden,
From me and from you.

To a house in a field
With a fast-locked door;
And silence, dark silence,
From the roof to the floor.

The SMART SET

*The
Aristocrat
Among
Magazines*



The Little Red Book

By Charles G. Shaw

Mazie: Plump, red-head, emerald eyes. Thinks Beaudelaire is the name of a new restaurant. Has a way of half closing her eyes and rolling them dreamily when wishing to display *l'amour*. Knows some good stories. Don't give you her right name. Phone 4689 Washington.

Grace: Big but affectionate. Dark brown hair which she does in a water wave. Teeth like Teclas. Begins to flirt with you after her second cocktail. After her fourth she begins to flirt with the waiter. Has no telephone but can be reached through Doris M. at 2773 Amsterdam.

Genevieve: Auburn hair and an ungodly appetite. Looks her best in a

one-piece bathing suit. Kisses with her eyes closed and her arms clasped about your neck. Have patience with her. She's O. K. Phone 6281 Broadway.

Edith: Tall, dark, blue eyes and willing. Usually dresses in black. Has a dear old mother in Cincinnati. Not so good after her third highball. Has walk-up apartment with kitchenette. Also a cocktail shaker but atrocious liquor. Is not particular as to where you take her to dinner. 1397 Rockefeller.

Lillian: Small blonde. Trim ankles. Wears large yellow hats and gray silk stockings rolled below the knees. Never suggests going home till daybreak. Likes caviar and Elinor Glyn. Don't

kiss her the first time you take her out. Phone 0782 Greenbaum.

Violet: Petite brunette. Bobbed hair. Wears poke bonnets and baby French heels. Her favorite epigrams are. "Let's get ginny," "How about another?" and "Here's to crime!" On her way home will drop off to sleep on your shoulder. Tells you that she has only loved two men and that you are one of them. Don't give her your phone number or you'll wish you never had a telephone. Hers is 7021 Palace.

Dorothy: Medium size. Muddy blonde. Fond of crab flakes à la Mornay and anecdotes about traveling salesmen. Uses Coty's Vertige. Insists upon telling you about her family, who live in Memphis, and once owned a thousand slaves. Over-rouges but dresses quietly. At her best by electric light. Flirtatious but fun. Phone 9644 Wanamaker.

Gladys: Tall, willowy, dreamy. Enters a room like a Russian wolfhound. Craves Veuve Clicquot 1906 but can be beaten down to synthetic gin 1922. Better in a taxi than in a restaurant. Lives on One Hundred and Eighty-third Street but is not fussy about going home alone. Good girl for a friend from out of town. 8777 Bloomberg.

Isabel: A perfect thirty-six. Henna and belladonna. Has a trick of pouring when wishing to register affection. Snuggles in public but freezes up like an oyster in private. At her best after 11:30 P.M. Lives with her grandfather, who is deaf and dumb. Phone 2066 Biltmore.

Rose: Met her only once but admired her technique. Will call her up soon. Looked like the Real Thing. 4731 Institution.

Marie: Small and dark. Told her - lived in Buffalo and that I get away only once every two weeks. Wants constant attention. Has eyes like the Aegean Sea and lips like Maraschino cherries. Didn't get her telephone number.

Elsie: Met her late one night at Nigger Pete's. Forget what she looked like but remember that she was hot stuff. Told me that her number was 6231 Hudson but this proved to be an undertaker's establishment where they didn't know her. A memory.

Louise: Knows all the latest song hits. Always insists upon dancing and then steps all over your feet. Has hazel eyes and a quick temper. Also an apartment with Victrola, but no gin. Phone 5515 Broadway.

Ethel: Diminutive and dimples. Believes that Napoleon ran a bakery. Always glad to see you. Full of superannuated wheezes and hums ancient ditties off key. Likes orchids and Atlantic City. No intellectual strain necessary. 6776 Belmont.

Beatrice: Straight bobbed hair and curly eyelashes. Has apartment with piano and Scotch whiskey. Piano doesn't work but the Scotch does. Wears openwork silk stockings and a baby smile. Likely to be booked up. Call her a couple of days in advance. Worth trying out. 1104 Lincoln.



NO truth is acceptable to the human race until it gets into a uniform and hires a band.



The Yellow Hope

By Edward E. Paramore, Jr.

I

I AM a typical, 24-karat, 1849 per cent Californian aristocrat. I make this boast to disarm in advance all the nitwits of normalcy who will rise to accuse me of being a German spy, a Bolshevik agent, or a syndicate of persons got together to foment trouble for its own sake. I repeat, I am a Californian aristocrat with all the typical credentials that go with the title. I was born in the back of Mattei's saloon at Los Olivos in 1870. My gold comes neither from the Wilhelmstrasse nor from the Kremlin, but from a celebrated dive in Sacramento (now converted into a house of public worship by the local Baptists) where my grandfather sold whiskey, trafficked in Mexican women, and dealt faro. When the Vigilantes hanged him, he left enough property in land to enable me to avoid work and sit back waiting for the Eastern sucker all the rest of my life.

With this vested interest in the country, which I inherited through my father when I was 17, I devoted the next thirty years of my life to the manufacture of that supreme folk myth—the California legend as it stands today. I helped organize the Million Dollar Booster Clubs that converted a thousand hitherto self-respecting and impecunious journalists into press agents and advertising copy writers. I spawned little stucco cages over the whole of Los Angeles county to house Methodists from Iowa and Kansas, and when they waxed so strong politically that Methodism as a state religion became a live election issue, I imported Christian Science from Boston, as a counter-

agent and it made so many converts among the retired hog-valets and their women that even the Catholic fathers in the missions had to practise absent treatment to keep their wealthier parishioners.

I play golf all morning, polo all afternoon, and bridge all night. I am a member of all the representative clubs, from the Pacific Union in San Francisco, where senile bankers and brokers snore upon leather lounges and dream of loot won in the East, to the Catalina Tuna Club, where movie actors learn to catch oil sharks with a hand line. It was I who persuaded the Associated Press to keep the fog and snow off the outbound press wires; it was I who thought of calling the San Francisco earthquake a fire; it was I who helped forge evidence against Tom Mooney and coached Oxman for the witness stand. And, in final proof of my California orthodoxy, I submit that I used to spend my winters haranguing the Rotary Clubs, the Chambers of Commerce, the Odd Fellow lodges, and the Methodist churches on the Japanese Peril.

I say I used to agitate against the Japanese: now I pray nightly to Buddha and the Shinto Trinity for them to come and deliver us. For, if the road to virtue lies through excess, the road to wisdom lies through satiated folly. After wallowing fifty-two years in the ever rising and spreading quagmire of American republicanism, I have come to the solid and unshakable realization that out of the Rising Sun (if anywhere) must come our new Messiah. I believe that an autocracy founded on a divine emperor, a rigid caste system,

and the annihilation (instead of the mere degradation) of the democratic dogma, is the only thing that will save the United States from the sterile uniformity of a vast prison-life—safe, moral, inarticulate, æsthetically and spiritually dead.

Japan alone of all the existing civilized countries possesses the proper qualifications for the job. Germany, founded on a class hierarchy that was archaic in structure, defective in political technique, and already poisoned at the roots by social democracy, is now so hopelessly bled and bilked by her enemies that she is in no position to assume the responsibility. I have no theoretical objections to Bolshevik Russia, whose final social architecture bears a close resemblance to Nietzsche's new order of rank. In fact, I helped Antonov direct the October revolution in Petrograd from the Smolny (an adventure of marvelous romantic gayety throughout) and even then I noticed that the People's Commissaries carried "The Joyful Wisdom" in their coat pockets and used "Das Kapital" for firewood, with the Communist Manifesto as kindling, two or three volumes of the proletarian Bible being sufficient to keep the entire præsidium warm during the three critical nights. But Bolshevism has also drifted into a kind of pernicious anæmia, out of which it will be lucky to effect a decent domestic recovery, let alone embark on any crusades.

II

JAPAN, however, gay in spirit, powerful, and unimproved by the European débâcle, is confronted with the logic of necessity. The rapid increase in her population demands an immediate decision of national policy. She hasn't enough natural resources of her own to change swiftly from agricultural feudalism to capitalistic industrialism and so import her food with the concomitant of free trade, as did England; and she refuses to accept the palliative of birth control, as witness her recent

treatment of Margaret Sanger. The only other course open to her is imperialistic expansion by means of war.

Japan is organized for war: it is her natural state: without it she cannot exist another decade without disintegration and ultimate extinction as a great power. With a diabetic thirst she has already drunk up Korea, Manchuria, and the Pacific Islands. America is her next preordained objective. I therefore solemnly propose that we announce to the world the utter bankruptcy of "the American experiment," and invite the Japanese in to reorganize the country peaceably, and so govern us.

It will be objected at once that America will deserve the contempt with which she is currently held by Europe and her own more enlightened citizens if she thus tamely submits to Japanese domination, but I hold that it is better to surrender, even supinely, than to die for a bad cause, and futile to oppose superior force with anything but superior cunning, of which we as a nation are incapable. As a loyal Californian, I know that the secret military preparations of Japan surpass in reality the wildest wish-fulfillment dreams of the Prussian war lords. I know that every Japanese fisherman is an imperial ensign in disguise, that every truck gardener is an army officer, and that scores of remote valleys on the Pacific Coast are literally choked with yellow shock troops smuggled in from Mexico and Canada, and ready to pillage, burn, and ravish at a signal from the Mikado. And as a plain American citizen I know that the Four Power Pact has achieved the deliberate Japanese objective of emasculating our military strength and making war inescapable at the same time. I will not dwell upon the inevitability of the conflict and the certainty of our defeat at horrible cost. If anyone doubts me, let him subscribe to the *Congressional Record* and read the rhetoric of the Pacific Coast politicians who are up for re-election. What I want to show is that the Japanese Peril is really a blessing in disguise.

No truly cosmopolitan reader, of course, will be deceived by the myth that Japan is a backward country. This is nothing less than another monstrous fiction inspired and nourished by the professional propagandists who control and regiment the lawful thought of the land. The ease with which they manipulated the mental reflexes of the literate citizenry during the late war is as nothing compared to the simplicity of creating a bogey-tale about Japan, which is an inaccessible country geographically, with a very difficult language, and almost no translated literature or journalism. The intellectual aristocracy of America (that is to say, the upper middle class economically) was not extensively imposed upon by the fulminations of the Creel Press Bureau because it had plenty of contact with the political and cultural life of Europe, but an understanding of Japanese civilization requires money, brains, and scholarship—a combination so rare in these United States as to be negligible. Consequently, the politicians and the venal press have been able to exploit the popular ignorance and credulity regarding Japan almost without controversy. The truth is that Japan is the only country in the world that still retains its economic, social, and political health. Flinders Petrie, probably the greatest living authority on the history of empires, has analyzed the collapse of no less than nine major attempts at civilization. In all of them the symptoms of decay were the same: political liberty, democracy, equality of the sexes. In Japan you will find none of these cancerous growths. She is solidly founded upon the three pillars of inequality, unorthodoxy, and empire.

Picture if you can the comparative Utopia that would be created by the union of American natural wealth with Japanese institutions. Picture a land free from the obscene spectacle of party politics, free from the crass domination of small-souled commercial sharps, morality-mongers, god-hoppers, patrioteers, and glorified race-track touts from

Wall Street. Picture our cities once again studded with pleasant beer gardens, booming with the brass of old-fashioned German bands, with kind-faced saloons on every street corner, and hotel bars flowing with ales and wine. Picture the complete emancipation of intellectual and artistic life, now declared unlivable and unmailable by the sovereign eunuchry, and the tremendous emotional release and joy of millions of people whose instincts have been twisted, warped, and suppressed by countless envious and extra-legal leagues of busybodies. The prospect staggers the imagination!

III

THE first task of the Japanese upon taking over the country would be the obliteration of democracy and the revision of the standards of class stratification. The Constitution, which has been a dead document anyway ever since the Civil War, would be properly embalmed, and preserved in the Museum of History as a literary curiosity. Congress would be abolished and the Capitol converted into a modern packing plant, where politicians would be shipped in from the state assemblies, city halls, and municipal wards, hygienically slaughtered, and exported for the cannibal markets under government monopoly.

Our native plutocracy of parvenu millionaires, who numbered 26,000 at the last census, would be expropriated and their property distributed among a specially created peerage of artists, prophets, philosophers, and military personages. The lesser nobility would be composed of distinguished members of the professions: doctors, lawyers (five or six perhaps), engineers, and scientists. On a par with these would be a number of eminent citizens, chosen each year by the Elder Statesmen, and ratified in their titles by the Emperor. These groups would constitute the governing class, and they alone would be invested with the suffrage, the number of votes possessed by each noble being

determined by the extent of his landed property and his cultural rating in the Japanese Bradstreet.

According to the social system instituted in the Fifth Century by the Emperor Moretsu (nineteenth Milako of the blood of Amaterazu, the sun goddess), the commoners would also be ranked in accordance with their social importance and dignity: first, the skilled craftsmen and mechanics; then the gentry who live by usury; then the merchants, traders, and others who live by sharp practise, and finally the proletariat. The players and mountebanks (which include the clergy) might be specially classified and retain certain privileges and immunities.

In view of the undeniably wretched condition of proletarian Japan today, which western authorities like to pretend is due to a medieval system of inhuman exploitation, perhaps it would be well to explain the Japanese conception of the rôle of the lower classes in society. Theoretically, the Japanese lower classes are not regarded as human beings at all, but as animals who are peculiarly adapted by nature and training to perform certain elementary tasks, such as fighting, digging, hewing wood, and drawing water. Hence they are neither invested with irrelevant political rights, nor inoculated with any nonsense about equality of souls, but frankly treated as superior beasts of burden, whom it is, of course, *noblesse oblige* to feed, clothe, and house with common care and decency.

That their standard of living is at present so low is due solely to the natural poverty of the islands, a misfortune easily remedied by a little energetic imperialism. Once the vast natural wealth of the United States is available, Japan will be able to raise both the home and the colonial proletariat out of the disease and muck of industrial freedom to the healthy, working efficiency of intelligent serfdom. Under Japanese control there is no reason why all our steel workers and coal miners should not be as well

off as the average Kansas cow or Louisiana mule.

It is obvious that this is a more honest and humane attitude toward the lower classes than our own disgusting hypocrisy about liberty and equality of opportunity, which is just a cad's excuse for dodging the responsibility of caring for his slaves. What sportsman could treat his horses no better than a Southern textile mill hand and escape expulsion from all his clubs? What bounder would dare to hunt foxes as niggers are hunted in Georgia? And what man not in a lunatic asylum would pretend that his hogs had a right to vote, or allow himself to be condemned to celibacy and abstinence by the cackling of his geese? The Japanese have no such Quixotic notions about life and humanity, and they will make short work of the idiocy in America.

Naturally, the destruction of political democracy and its amorphous social framework will involve a complete *bouleversement* in morals. The American moral order is a gigantic network of interlocking moral units which are held in equilibrium by the force of reciprocal suppression. Each group conceives of liberty as the liberty to harass and suppress every other group and does so constantly and with sadistic zest, with the exception of certain scapegoat groups, such as Negroes, Socialists, and I. W. W., who can only gratify their invasive impulses by violence, and sabotage, or seek refuge in delusions of class grandeur. The result is that almost all the energy that civilized peoples are accustomed to spend in æsthetic and cultural diversion is, in America, absorbed in a senseless struggle to keep the moral organism static. The Japanese, if I read the meaning of the geisha girl, the thirty-four course feast, the hot saki wassail, and the Yoshiwara aright, may be counted on to abate this nuisance as quickly as possible and to introduce that self-respecting moral anarchy which has always constituted the true freedom of feudal empires. It is, I hope, unnecessary to add that by moral

anarchy I do not mean the abrogation of the criminal code, but the simple freedom to eat and drink what one pleases, to enjoy books, pictures, music, plays, ballets, and buffooneries without first having to have their chemical purity attested by illiterate specialists in sin and damnation, and to conduct one's amours without having to circumvent irrelevant and exasperating hazards imposed by repressed lechers.

The criminal law, it may be confidently predicted, will be restored by the Japanese administration to its proper function of punishing crime instead of sin. When I was in Japan in 1918 I had the sense and temerity to force my acquaintance on the civil governor-general of Korea, and found him my most illuminating informant on matters of penology and colonial government. He was an extraordinarily alert and provocative conversationalist, whose ribald delight in the obscene and grotesque was only equaled by his enthusiasm for exotic American drinks, all of which he seemed to have tried at one time or another. Since the bar of the Imperial Hotel in Tokio (where we met) was frequented by tourists from every state in the Union, each taking a pedantic joy in teaching the bartenders the alchemy of their favorite form of fancy scamper juice, he had probably ingested permutations and combinations of all the basic liquors of North America, and I fear the poor fellow is now far gone in Bright's or atrophic cirrhosis. But he brought to bear upon the art of penology more common sense, humanity, and humor than any of the Occidental Lombrosos and Thomas Mott Osbornes I have ever heard of. It was his contention that fining, caging, and murdering delinquents was not only a futile and unimaginative method of public vengeance and judicial spite, but that it applied exclusively to crimes against property and crimes of passion, which are relatively rare, and absolutely ignored the more annoying and ubiquitous misdemeanors of bad taste, hypoc-

risy, a malicious disposition, or a paltry soul.

The ideal penology (he said) existed in Japan during the golden age of the *shoguns* and the *samurai*, before the mechanical and commercial superiority of western civilization began to seduce the Japanese into believing that western social institutions were also superior. The nobility were immune from arrest, except for treason, but they observed a rigorous code of personal honor involving various degrees of self-punishment, of which *hari-kari* is one of the last survivals. For the commoners, including the professional and merchant classes, there was, besides the regular criminal court, a special court for the punishment of the petty vices of mean characters. The judges of this court, who were especially qualified by a wide culture and a strong sense of humor, were forbidden to impose cruel or excessive penalties, but exerted the utmost ingenuity and resourcefulness in devising punishments which should fit the crime.

In fact, W. S. Gilbert got the inspiration for his mild and merry Mikado from Yoshitsune, an emperor who ruled in the twelfth century and created the ancient criminal code of Japan. Scandal-mongers, adulterers of food and merchandise, lying advertisers, nagging wives, stingy husbands, boot-lickers, log-rollers, sycophants, writers of bad verse and mawkish tales, debauchers of the public taste, spoil-sports, gluttons, braggarts, snoopers and profiteers—every sort of petty scoundrel was made to suffer a penalty embodying the best poetic justice within the imagination of the presiding judge. This court was abolished shortly after commercial intercourse was established with the United States out of deference to the American traders and tourists, who were being haled before it so often that they were unable to get any business or sight-seeing done, but there is today a strong movement in the Conservative Party to restore it with plenary powers.

If this comes to pass, a similar court

will be set up in the overseas dominions, which will add another blessing to the Japanese conquest. At last we will have legal relief from the pests, fakers and blackguards who now thrive unmolested and even exalted throughout the land. The surrender of a little abstract sovereignty is a cheap price to pay for being rid of the grosser obscenities of small-town boosters, go-getters, fighting salesmen, he-men with a big, live Message, and professional optimists, together with their dupes, satellites, and hired press agents. The substitution of a rising sun for forty-eight stars would be doing us a favor if thereby we could secure the deportation of patrioteers, or compel the writers of Dixie and Mammy songs to spend the rest of their days in Alabam' on a diet of hot cakes and watermelon.

When I taxed the governor-general with slaughtering the Koreans, he admitted the necessity of creating certain political crimes, and cited the Koreans as a case in point. They were, he said, the Armenians of the East. Without the pugnacity and spiritual hardihood of the Irish, who are always most obstreperous when the odds against them are greatest, the Koreans (like the Armenians) never achieve the nobility of open insurrection, but keep up a ceaseless whining and nagging propaganda which infuriates the colonial administrators and periodically goads them to violent reprisal. Official patience is further strained by the influx of swarms of Christian missionaries from the more benighted sections of the United States, who perform all sorts of thaumaturgic tricks and evangelical necromancy on the natives, often exciting them to such an emotional pitch that they run amuck and have to be shot down in the interest of public safety.

"But," continued his Excellency, "for all our massacres of these wretched creatures, they are as far away from extermination as the Armenians are. The more we kill, the more there seem to be to whine in the churches and political conferences of Western Europe and

America, begging for free bread, free doctoring, and the inalienable right to convert their country into a democratic madhouse!"

IV

No such racial complication, however, could exist in a Japanized America. Deprived of the luxury of becoming drunk on salvation and liberty in its various mischievous disguises (such as self-determination, social equality, all-Africanism, etc.) the Negro and his problem would vanish. Deprived of the power of economic discrimination, the race war against the Oriental in California would be decided on its merits instead of by selective privilege. The real basis of the anti-Japanese movement has always been the superior competitive qualities of the Jap; the racial arguments against him are pure hypocrisy, and very shortsighted hypocrisy at that. It is said, for instance, that the Japanese are unassimilable, although every freshman student of anthropology knows that all races are mutually inter-fertile and that the Eurasian is perhaps the most successful of all the half-caste types. It is argued on the floor of the Senate that we want no Buddhist temples in our fair land, although California is the most notorious asylum of rococo religions and cuckoo creeds in the universe. A disingenuous wail arises from the subsidized statisticians that Japanese fecundity threatens "white supremacy," but the janissaries of Hiram Johnson and the Southern Pacific, meeting yearly in the legislature at Sacramento, refuse to legalize the dissemination of the contraceptive knowledge in common use among their own women.

In the present condition of things, the California employing classes are very stupid to oppose Asiatic immigration because it means cheap labor and docile servants. The opposition of organized labor, founded on the "pauper labor" fallacy, is also stupid, for in the long run the Asiatics would organize into unions, too, and adopt the Ameri-

can standard of living. Under Nipponese rule, of course, the whole conflict would dissolve, because slave unions would be illegal, contraceptive information would be as free as it is in the best country clubs today, and miscegenation would be quite unpenalized. Indeed, extensive racial cross-fertilization should result in as many beautiful and exotic types as there are flowers in the garden of an expert horticulturist. I yield to no one in my admiration for the American girl, who, with the possible exception of the Georgian Greuzene, is the most beautiful pure-blooded creature in the world, and I take no stock whatever in her reputed frigidity, which is due entirely to the stupidity of the 100 per cent. American husband. But in spite of her beauty, her smart clothes, and her physical freshness and vitality, there is a certain emotional and sensuous monotony about her which makes one long for the zest of the *mastiza*, the *china-blanca*, and the *mestizo-clara*. How else can one account for the decadent enthusiasm for "high yellows" and "high browns" now sweeping the cabaret crowds of New York?

Let it not be supposed that the Japanese dominion will involve any religious persecution. On the contrary, the Japs will almost certainly insist on a fair field and no favor, except that religion, of course, will be necessarily divested of its traditional power for mischief. Historically, the Japanese have always exhibited the utmost tolerance toward organized religion because they, of all people, have clearly appreciated its true societal function, which is to act as a spiritual light wine and beer for the masses, while providing an elaborately sensuous ritualism for sanctifying the conduct of the ruling shogunate.

Before the militant evangelism of the Portuguese began in 1549 the Japanese feudatories (who regard Shintoism and Buddhism as no more than rival lodges which put on slightly different kinds of shows), were quite willing to accept Christianity on the same terms (thinking that it would help trade with the Occident), and they tried out both its

doctrine and its miracle-mongering in the most amiable and experimental fashion. For example, in the latter part of the sixteenth century, the Lazarus dead-raising trick was attempted on several hundred Koreans (unsuccessfully), and a dozen foreign missionaries were drowned during water-walking experiments. Burning at the stake rapidly became popular in Kioto and Yeddo, and one historian, Hirado, records that when a Spanish monk belonging to one of the ascetic orders was arrested for stealing the edible sacrifices from a Buddhist altar, and suggested, in his defense, that "he who was without sin should cast the first stone," the simple fisher-folk threw rocks at him until the sun went down.

It was only after the Christian propagandists, annoyed at their failure to make converts unless conversion assured explicit commercial advantages, and unable to live at peace with the happy heathen priestcraft, began resorting to Islamic methods, that they lost their proselyting privileges and had to be deported or executed under the current public nuisance act. Nevertheless, the Japanese, in spite of their disastrous early experience with Christianity, have jealously guarded their tradition of religious tolerance (there are now quite as many Christians in Japan as Buddhists in America, if not a few more) and they may be expected to enforce it in their American colonies.

Naturally, religion will not be permitted to exert any political influence, nor to inflame the mob into a psychopathic fury as at present, but its pageantry, its comedy, and its showmanship will be free and untrammelled. Indeed, the glorious panorama of religious controversy under a Japanese protectorate ought to be one of the most entertaining features of the new American life. Think of the gargantuan spectacle of Baptists, Buddhists, Holy Rollers, Seventh Day Adventists, Shintoists, Mormons, Christadelphians, Shakers, Inmates of the House of David, Presbyterians, Christian Scientists, Theosophists, Dukhobors, Mora-

vians, Jews, Swedenborgians, New Mexican sun worshippers, and Black voodooists in one grand free-for-all battle-royal, piling idiocy upon imbecility, meeting absurdity with asininity, and confounding superstition with hallucination to their soul's content!

A gold medal might be awarded annually by the Academy of Comedians for the funniest sermon, the most ridiculous moral diatribe, or the most ingenious piece of ritualistic hokum of the year, the recipient to be declared a member of the court jester's staff by imperial edict. Since nothing but public amusement would be at stake, it might add a delightfully ironic touch to apply the old bogus American doctrine of democratic opportunity and award the medal now to some pyrotechnic Billy Sunday with a jazz concept of Heaven, now to some risible Bishop Manning, and the following year to a Mississippi witch doctor, or perhaps a Zuni snake dancer. In fact, in the field of religion, the possibilities for healthy, Rabelaisian buffoonery are virtually unlimited.

V

THIS leads me to my final argument in favor of the Japanese conquest, which is the profound change for the better it would inaugurate in the position of women. When I say that the Japanese idea of women will mean the doom of feminism, I do not speak merely as an old-fashioned gentleman enraged at the female encroachments on his sovereignty. I realize that in a democratic society, where the sex struggle is largely carried on in the economic field, the women must take over the entire apparatus of masculine competitive tech-

nique for their own defense. It is one thing to live under the protective banner of mother or mistress, and quite another thing to be forced to act like a wage-earner competing for a job.

In Japan women are not treated like a subordinate species of male, but are regarded with a respect which takes full cognizance of their special nature and limitations. The result is that the Japanese woman has attained a degree of charm and spiritual serenity that so amazed Lafcadio Hearn (easily the foremost authority) that he devoted a whole book to her eulogy. I do not say that such a temperamental revolution would take place in American women as soon as the Japanese Viceroy set up shop in the White House, but at least the conditions would be ripe for it.

In conclusion, let me recapitulate the blessings of Japanese rule:

It will exchange our bogus democracy for an intelligent aristocracy, rigidly protected against adulteration by an intransigent family tradition.

It will break up the clerical camorra of Puritanism, but without damaging its genius for bravura comedy.

It will liberate the natural impulses of a people tormented for generations by self-constituted envoys of a jealous God created in their image.

It will restore the essence of liberty, which is not collective, but personal.

It will prevent a gangrenous capitalism from digging its own grave.

In short, it will convert the America of ugliness, penance, and moral order into an America of beauty, humor, and spiritual health.

Therefore, I say: bring on the Mikado, and deliver up the country to him, his heirs and assigns in a perpetuity.



“The Mother’s Heart”

[*A Complete Novelette*]

By Richmond Brooks Barrett

CHAPTER I

THE first showing in New York of “The Mother’s Heart” resulted, of course, in a personal triumph for Maxwell Skinner Hastings. The great director, however, would not have been much moved if the occasion had meant merely the increase of his own prestige. Up to this famous evening, the moving-picture had been regarded with good-natured tolerance by the sophisticated; in future, it would be entitled to as respectful consideration as the spoken drama. “The Mother’s Heart” had set up a new standard. Far from speaking disparagingly of “this new industry,” the public would now talk in eager tones of “this new and authentic *art*.”

It was no wonder, then, that Maxwell Skinner Hastings should have felt purged of anything as petty as the desire to pat himself on the back. The cinema had come into its own—that was the great point; the realization of his part in the battle gave him the sense of unselfish devotion that comes to every pioneer, every martyr who has enlisted in a great cause. He tried to tell the clamoring audience just what his feelings were; but the shouts of “Hastings! Hastings!” proved, rather disconcertingly, that the enthusiastic crowds took a less prophetic—a less cosmic—view of the situation than he did himself. His personal success counted tremendously with them; he was somehow unable to teach them his larger viewpoint.

The advance notices of “The Mother’s Heart” had in a way pre-

pared the spectators for something out of the ordinary run; and the illustrated souvenir programs handed out by the ushers sounded a decidedly hopeful note. The emotional response of the audience to the picture itself was deftly prepared for by the choice of ushers: instead of the usual group of painted young women, a half-dozen gold-star mothers, whose records had been investigated and found impeccable, had been granted the privilege of showing people to their seats. After following a gentle-faced, silver-haired widow down the aisle, the strongest man found that his tears weren’t very far from the surface. It was only natural that, before two hundred feet of “The Mother’s Heart” had been reeled off, the sheepish blowing of male noses should have commenced—not to mention the franker female whimpers.

The illustrated program had sought to reconcile the audience to possible lachrymose betrayals. On the cover, beneath the photograph of Hastings in a tweed Norfolk suit and golf-stockings, were these words of warning: “You are not ashamed to laugh at the brighter noontide aspects of life; do not be ashamed to cry at the pathos of its twilight. I ask, this evening, not for your applause but for your tears.” Signed—strikingly and illegibly—Maxwell Skinner Hastings! The first page of the program was given over to an essay by Hastings on “Mothers.” The sentences were very long and the choice of words showed profound erudition, but the fundamental ideas were simple to a degree.

The contents of the second page witnessed the director's cleverness in the employment of contrast. He veered without warning from the heart-strings to the purse-strings, as one very shallow scoffer among the critics pointed out in his review the next day. "Cost of production," read the headline of page two. "Mr. Hastings is proud to announce the fact that the total expenditure necessary to bring 'The Mother's Heart' to a state approaching perfection was, in money, \$771,492; in time, eleven and a half months. The ball-room in Mrs. Livingstone's mansion is an exact replica of that in one of Newport's most famous palaces. It required over fifty thousand dollars to assemble this set. Miss Myrtle Marsden's reception-gown was created by Paquin, the bodice being embroidered with real pearls. This one costume cost over three thousand dollars. Nothing but the finest vintage champagne was consumed by the guests at the Livingstone entertainment. Only by perfection of details can perfection of the ensemble be attained."

The last item in the extravagant cash-account was this: "Mr. Hastings takes great pleasure in presenting to each of his friends this illustrated booklet, which after tonight will be sold in the lobby for fifty cents the copy."

By the time the lights were lowered and the orchestra had begun its "pot-pourri of old-fashioned melodies," the fortunate people in the theatre were feeling positively embarrassed at the extent of their obligation to the generous Maxwell Skinner Hastings; but, remembering that the great man demanded payment only in tears, they proceeded to a spendthrift squandering of them.

It was really wonderful, Hastings' understanding of just how much a human system could stand: he would keep the spectators crying up to the very moment where the strain of one more sob would have resulted in actual physical pain; then, in a flash, he would introduce a scene of real wholesome fun, thus bringing into play a new set

of muscles and giving the tear-apparatus a needed rest. The contrasts in "The Mother's Heart" were brought about, not so much by the demands of the story as by the physical resources of the audience. That in itself was a discovery for which the world owed Hastings an eternal gratitude.

Moreover, the great director had had the kindly forethought to finish on a gay note. It would have been rather unfortunate for the strong men present if the turning on of the lights had found them with streaming eyes. Up to the very conclusion of the last reel it seemed more than likely that the overburdened heart of the mother in question might cease to beat; she did have a hard uphill fight toward the end. But her constitution proved to be so tough that she even survived the heavy shower of gold with which she was tardily pelted at the close of the picture. "Zeus himself wasn't more generous with his Danaë-wench," to quote an obscene mythological allusion of the dissenting critic.

A full five minutes of the purest homespun comedy, a rollicking dance-tune by the orchestra and "The Mother's Heart" flickered out!

But the most exciting moments of the historic occasion were yet to come. As one man, the audience leaped to its thousand pairs of legs and showed its approval by ringing, spontaneous cheers. "Pandemonium broke loose," as the advertisements had it next day. The shouts of "Hastings! Hastings!" carried a command that could not be disobeyed; it was at once apparent that the director's friends wanted a speech and were doggedly determined to get it.

All great men are incurably shy. Hastings was not an exception to the rule. As he walked out upon the stage, he looked like a big scared boy, happy in a dazed way but at the same time rather miserable. He gave one swift glance at the audience, then turned his face imploringly toward the wings. At last he shrugged, grinned a sheepish resignation and muttered, "I thought the people back-stage here were my

friends; but they've all run away—even Miss Marsden. It's the first time she has ever left me in the lurch."

His hearers greeted this extemporaneous witticism with a roar of delight; at once the tension relaxed and a certain courage seemed to stir in Hastings' breast. He squared his shoulders, stepped up to the footlights and spoke without pause—except when he delivered an applause-cut—for twenty minutes by the clock.

That the full force of his message should have been lost was of course inevitable; this man's physical presence was so vivid and romantic that, strive as he might to talk in abstract terms of the cinema, to force home a truly objective lesson, his listeners must needs give their closest attention to his picturesque personality; indeed, the power for good of the moving-picture made much less impression on the women out front than the queer twitch of Hastings' right eyebrow. Still, the speech did have a profound effect—of that there could be no question. The great man's ideas of censorship, for example, were too striking to go unheeded.

"Censorship will not harm the reputable producer," he had announced proudly. "The purpose of all art that is authentic and fine is to teach a moral lesson. Art and morality—are they not one and the same in essence? True art and intelligent censorship should be stanch allies. Let the man who panders to the public's pornographic instincts tremble under the scalpel of investigation; we others welcome anything that is done in behalf of the people's morals."

At the close of his instructive discourse, Hastings dwelt briefly on the short episode in "The Mother's Heart" that had been staged on the battle-fields of France.

"The world conflict," he explained, "came to its glorious termination some time ago. The ache of those years remains, however; the great public still cannot endure the strain of a motion-picture whose theme is that so recent Calvary. 'The Mother's Heart' is *not*

a so-called 'war' picture. The war enters the story for a few moments—that I do not deny. Why did I see fit to bring in the struggle? Simply because I did not want you to *forget* too easily the deeds of heroism on the one side and the hideous crimes on the other. Remember these words, 'Lest we forget.' They were penned by one of the great poets of all time, my friends."

At this point, the readers of Kipling in the audience shouted their recognition of the passage quoted; not to be outdone, the less intellectual sought to conceal their appalling ignorance by crowing just as lustily as the initiate.

When it became evident that the momentous harangue had ended on the "Lest we forget" note of poetical fervor the clamor swelled to a pitch of positive hysteria. Hastings bowed his head; it was almost as if, deeming himself unworthy, he flinched at such acclaim. Then, with a swift inspiration, he strode at a nervous speed off the stage and in a moment had returned, stubbornly dragging along with him the frustrated and reluctant Myrtle Marsden. He patted the celebrated ingénue's hand and was seen to draw a deep sigh of relief. It was easier to undergo the ordeal of applause if there was someone else around with whom a man could share it—or, as the mocking critic in the fifth row would have sneered, "with whom a man could *appear* to share it."

Miss Marsden, a pretty brunette with a range of facial expression that consisted entirely of a pout and a batting of eyelashes, yet possessed enough intelligence to follow Hastings' lead in the display of perplexed modesty; she tugged her hand away from his, skipped out of sight and reappeared with dear old Mrs. Brown, in whose frail person beat the heart that had given the picture its title. Impulsively, Miss Marsden threw her arms around the older woman and kissed her. Hastings stood off at one side for a time and led the applause; then, stirred to forgetfulness of his usual quiet dignity, he had rushed forward and shouted at the audience,

"Come on now—three cheers for Mrs. Brown!"

The response was deafening. Mrs. Brown nervously took off her spectacles, wiped her eyes, curtsied to left and right. At length, she put a gnarled forefinger to her lips; at once, there came a reverent hush.

"Three cheers for the greatest man in moving pictures—Maxwell Skinner Hastings!" the old woman's voice piped on a quavering note.

That was more than Hastings could stand. He simply took to his heels then and there and raced for cover. Mrs. Brown and Miss Marsden, remaining on the stage, beckoned wildly and waved frantic arms in the direction of the vanished hero, finally scampering off together in quest of him. Soon, crest-fallen and pouting, Miss Marsden returned with the tidings that Mr. Hastings could not be found, that he must have *left* the theatre!

So the asbestos curtain was lowered and the overheated audience filed reluctantly up the aisles. The epochal first-showing of "The Mother's Heart" had passed into the annals of history.

CHAPTER II

"You do look more like your father every day. It's too bad; if you'd taken after *me*, you wouldn't have to be careful of your figure. I never give a thought to mine."

"I am very busy. I haven't the time—and I *certainly* haven't the inclination—to gossip this morning." Maxwell Skinner Hastings, sitting in front of the desk in his library, looked forbiddingly stern. "A man who works as hard as I do isn't in any danger of growing stout. Intelligent people needn't worry about their figures. In-operative brains cause fat. Take Jobes, my butler, for instance! The poor fellow's going through a fearful course of sprouts—at my expense—to reduce his weight. *I'm* quite safe, however."

He tapped his skull—a gesture of eloquent comment.

"By the way," he then remarked with

some acerbity, "I think you said this was to be a *business* talk?" Perhaps he had realized that his protestations might have argued a certain anxiety.

"Your father was unwieldy, a burden to himself, before he died. Of course, that was years after we'd stopped speaking to each other." Hastings' companion, a woman with excessively yellow hair and the face of a hungry old lioness, seemed in a reflective mood; the great director's impatience to get back to his work didn't bother her in the least.

"I won't have you talking to me about that man." Hastings brought a thunderous fist down on his desk. "If you haven't any business to transact, I wish to God you'd get out."

"You're an odd boy, Max." The woman's eyes sparkled; she kept them wide open, as if afraid to wink lest her lashes, covered with some black, sticky stuff, might lose their petal-like arrangement and all get glued together in a disconcerting mess. "You're just as keen and crooked as I am, you know. You'd cheat me if I didn't watch out. That's the side of you I like. But where in the name of heaven did you get all this sentimental *belief* in yourself? I've tried hard to think it was a wicked pose; but it isn't, Max. You honestly think you're reforming the world with your 'Mothers' Hearts' and things."

She indulged in a brazenly coquettish smile—not at all with an idea of charming Hastings but simply from force of habit. Then, humming abstractedly, she ran an exploring hand over her hair and nodded her approval of its arrangement.

Hastings breathed out a sigh that was half a groan of exasperation.

"You weren't at the first showing last night?" he asked.

"Good Lord, no!" She laughed at the question. "I'm an intelligent woman, Max, even though I *am* your mother."

"I see." His voice had a tinge of asperity. "But you've got your eye on the box-office all the same."

"That's natural." She was matter-of-fact. "That's why I came to call

today—to tell you I know just how much of a jump my allowance is due to take."

Slipping off her wrap, she got to her feet and sauntered across the room to the mirror over the mantel. She preened at her effulgent image, took in proudly the amazing compression of her hips, the vast expanse of her unrestrained bosom; despite her protestations, it was obvious that her figure required the nicest manipulation, the deftest possible harnessing.

"I'm glad the picture's a success," she mused. "The price of everything, even the simplest frock, is appalling nowadays. I don't see *how* the Marsden girl gets by on the starvation wage you pay her."

"I've never heard her complain." Hastings was abrupt.

"Oh, she's still mad about you, Max." The woman shrugged. "Fools like her are always faithful. Why don't you marry her?"

Hastings ignored the query.

"It's eleven o'clock," he announced. "Please—if you've got figures to present—give them to me now. I can compare them with my own; they *may* tally—this time."

"Yes, yes. I have them right here." She clicked open her bag, and with a businesslike promptness, tossed him a sheet of paper. "Of course they *won't* tally," she warned him. "You'll have to add a bit and I'll have to subtract some, as usual. I think a compromise can be reached, however."

She left off gazing at her image and turned to the man.

"Don't get furious with me, Max, for giving you advice," she remarked. "I'm really fond of you—as fond as a normal, clever woman can be of a man with such muddled, sentimental ideas. Why *don't* you marry Marsden?"

"Good God!" Hastings threw up his hands in a despairing gesture. "Won't you ever learn to mind your own affairs?"

At this point, however, he was betrayed into answering the woman's rude question. It was an involuntary assertion, prompted by his prodded

vanity. "Myrtle doesn't happen to be the right woman for me, if you must know. She—well, she's not my *equal*."

"Your equal? I never said she was. The poor thing's plain simple-minded, Max. If you're planning on a wife who's your equal, you'll be the most miserable man alive."

"Why?" Hastings was beginning to wish heartily that he hadn't encouraged the topic; but his angry curiosity goaded him on to press for particulars.

"Why?" the woman echoed scornfully. "Simply because you couldn't exist anywhere but on a pedestal. You'd never have to step down with Marsden—"

"Don't call her *Marsden*!" Hastings was sharp. "I hate to hear a woman called by her last name."

"Oh, all right." She accepted the rebuke good-naturedly. "Myrtle would stand anything. She's been willing enough to be thrown over precipices and swung by her heels out of third-story windows—just to please you."

"You don't know what you're talking about," Hastings told her haughtily. "Myrtle's an artist; she does what the script demands. Of course," this with an offhand air, "I don't deny—"

His companion interrupted him triumphantly. "You don't deny that the man behind the camera was really responsible. That's just what I'm trying to prove, my dear Max. There's no use arguing when we agree, now is there?"

"Certainly not. I'd be a fool to pretend Myrtle wouldn't marry me." Hastings grimly admitted the truth of the ingénue's infatuation.

"And you'll be more of a fool if you let her go."

Hastings threw himself back in his chair with undisguised exasperation; for the woman had followed up her last remark by sitting down again with dogged determination.

"Mind!" she exclaimed, ignoring his impatience. "I'm not doing this for Myrtle's sake; I'd be only too glad to wring her silly neck. It's *you* I'm considering."

"Well, if you want to consider me, mind your own business," he snapped.

Her eyes, wide and arch and quizzical, had also a gleam of frank amusement.

"What you need most of all is a girl you can browbeat," she persisted. "You're getting to be an important man—oh, so important! You'll be coming in for some hard knocks, now you've arrived. Think how Myrtle's stupid adoration would help you, when people begin to tumble to your childish pictures. She'd tell you the whole world was jealous; and you'd believe every word the little idiot said. Even you, if you were alone or if you had a wife who saw through you, might get shaky about your greatness. Besides—" She shook her head ominously at him—"Have you been weighed lately, Max?" Her abrupt veer seemed irrelevant.

Hastings, however, knew better. He jumped to his feet, furiously kicked an open desk-drawer shut and cried:

"Will you *stop* this everlasting talk?"

"Now, *Max!*" Her voice had a patient, soothing quality. "I'm saying all this for your own good. You're so gruff, such a *bear!* A man ought to be prepared—otherwise, before he knows it, it's too late to reduce. That was your father's case, you know. He refused to listen to the warnings of well-meaning people. He regretted it later—how the poor man regretted it! Or so I've heard. He was still slim when we separated."

Hastings fastened on her the glare of a basilisk. She bit her lips to indicate contrition.

"Ah—I forgot!" she confessed. "But I wasn't really *talking* about him; I was just using him as an example, Max. The point is, you see, that if you married Myrtle and still couldn't help getting stout, she'd say the *scales* lied."

Hastings had by this time turned his back on the loquacious woman and, striding to the door, had wrenched it open.

"You're very impetuous at times," she murmured. "I like that trait in you; you get it *straight* from me."

Hastings only jerked his head with a blind ferocity first at the woman, then in the direction of the next room.

"I honestly believe," she commented on the gesture, "that, if you were a bull, you'd *gore* me at this minute."

She sighed, put on her wrap, consulted the mirror and then took the straight road for the front door indicated by the lowering director.

"Good-bye, Max." She was still gentle. "When you cool off a bit you'll be grateful to me, I'm sure. If I were you, I'd speak to old Jobs about this reduction treatment; it may be just what you need. And do let me know as soon as possible about my allowance, there's a dear boy."

Her last words were rendered inaudible by the terrific slam of the library door at her back.

CHAPTER III

"You say Rosenthal will be delighted with the terms I offer; very well, it's a bargain. Of course, *I* understand that art is universal in its appeal. It has no concern with arbitrary national boundaries or racial prejudices." Maxwell Skinner Hastings spoke with an oratorical impressiveness. His deep-set eyes were fixed ponderingly on the library floor; his expression at present had a solemn serenity.

"So you see where I stand," he continued, shifting his gaze with a deliberate, weighty gravity to the nervously smiling man in the easy chair; the easy chair in question wasn't more than a foot away from Hastings' nose, but somehow it seemed as if the director's slowly traveling glance had swept over whole continents before it came to rest on his companion. He smiled a dignified, rather stern smile.

"I knew you'd talk like that. I hadn't a doubt of it, Mr. Hastings."

The small blond man in the easy chair let his admiration beam out of his round eyes. In an effort to get the interview down to a less austere plane, he crossed his fat, short legs nonchalantly and took a monogrammed ciga-

rette from the smoking-stand at his elbow. "Go after the best pictures—that *would* be your motto. Don't let a 'made-in-Germany' label scare you off."

While he was lighting his cigarette, his tightly trousered left leg slipped away from its moorings on his right knee; he tugged it back with both hands and held it firmly in place.

Hastings elevated his eyebrows in polite protest.

"It's not my opinion, Baumfeld," he remarked in a tone of gentle rebuke, "that the *best* pictures are those taken in Germany. Far from it, in fact."

The sleek Baumfeld was at once all apology.

"Naturally, Mr. Hastings, I didn't mean to imply that foreign pictures came up to the American standard. I meant the best of the *European* output."

His plump, pink face quivered with chagrin.

Hastings waved a magisterial hand in acceptance of the excuse.

"I saw two of Herr Rosenthal's pictures abroad this spring," he explained. "In many respects they were—well, to put it badly—crude. The lighting, for example, had no subtlety, no nuance; and the stories were just stories—no underlying message for the audience to carry away. That, of course, is a mistake. Something more positive than mere entertainment—that's what we work for over here."

"Oh, I know, I know." Baumfeld's high voice rose to a passionate falsetto in response to these words of wisdom. "But Herr Rosenthal has it in him to learn, to profit. I met him a few months ago; he's an idealist."

Hastings gave a characteristic omniscient nod. "I noticed in the Rosenthal pictures some intelligent, some very encouraging direction. Fitful—not sustained, unfortunately! But a talent that might, with instruction, ripen into genius—the fellow has that potentiality. I should be glad to give him a helping hand. I had no one to aid *me*; I had to force my way up alone, Baumfeld."

Baumfeld positively cringed at the lurid light thus thrown by the great man

upon his years of struggle and mortification. He tossed aside his half-finished cigarette, as if ashamed of so frivolous an indulgence at a time when Hastings was pointing out the murky abyss of the past.

"It's damned lucky you didn't go under, Mr. Hastings," he fervently piped. "Where would moving-pictures be now if you'd lost your nerve?"

Hastings made no attempt to answer that question. He removed his smouldering eyes from the flower-pink Baumfeld and, with an eloquent shake of his shoulders, rid himself of the nightmare past.

"I don't want to see another man put to such a test," he resumed, as if talking musingly to himself; "Herr Rosenthal deserves encouragement. The fact that he's a German subject doesn't matter. I am willing to buy the American rights to his three most recent pictures—and, by the way, that naturally will mean an *option* on all his future productions. I'm glad to hear he is an idealist; I *hate* haggling, Baumfeld. He will appreciate the fact that I stand to lose a lot of money on this venture."

He paused; then with a patient smile of resignation he wound up:

"I think I have proved to you now that my belief in the universality of Art is not a mere prose."

Baumfeld laughed out his hysterical delight at the arch query.

"Why, you're a champion, Mr. Hastings!" he cried. "You're the saviour of the cinema!" He cleared his throat rather uneasily, then ventured on a quavering note, "but—er—I have no authority to clinch that item of the option, I'm afraid."

"But, my dear Baumfeld!" Hastings showed a hurt surprise. "Does it strike you as fair that I, after attempting under the greatest handicaps to start this fellow on the right road, should run the risk of losing him if by some queer freak of chance he became popular? Oh no, no—that's altogether absurd."

He drew himself up with superb dignity. "Let me warn you that the Rosen-

thal man is not in a position to dictate terms to *me*. He's in desperate need of ready money; he'll go out of sight if he doesn't get it. Well, here it is." He tapped his swelling chest. "The check goes today, provided you give me that option. It is agreed?"

Hastings at this moment was the arch-potentate, the magnificent monarch of the films. He surveyed Baumfeld as from a distant height and his mouth had a sneer of frank scorn.

Poor Baumfeld was at once reduced to abject servility. It was Hastings' power suddenly, in the midst of a petty bicker with an inferior, to remove himself from the wrangle, to become in a flash aloof and infinitely remote and to crush his opponent under a mighty weight of authority. Without warning, Baumfeld's business sense crashed into ruin and he felt only his utter littleness. It wasn't a question of terms now; Hastings' study was occupied, not by two shrewd barterers, but by a god and a worm. The prostrate pink-and-white Jew found himself kissing the hem of the master's robe, so to speak.

"Oh yes—it's agreed," came the broken falsetto. "Of course Herr Rosenthal will understand; he will be most grateful—*most* grateful."

He wrung his puffy hands in a gesture of supplication.

Maxwell Skinner Hastings seemed at this moment to step off his mountain-peak and to descend patronizingly to Baumfeld's side.

"I shall have the necessary papers drawn up," he announced. "Come back at four, Baumfeld. My secretary will fix you up and give you the check. Good morning!"

He nodded curtly over his shoulder; the interview was ended.

Baumfeld grabbed up his hat, stammered out an incoherent stream of compliments and scurried for the door.

"One moment!" Hastings called him back. "You understand, naturally, that my name is not to be *mentioned* in this transaction. My public might put a false interpretation on the business. It will be necessary to present the case of

Rosenthal rather gradually to American minds; it will take time to educate them up to a really objective view of Art. Besides, Rosenthal is big enough to attract attention on his own merits; he wouldn't want to be floated in on the wave of another's prestige."

Again the abrupt nod of dismissal and the Hastings back swung squarely around on Baumfeld.

CHAPTER IV

At least once a fortnight, Maxwell Skinner Hastings lunched in some conspicuous place with Miss Myrtle Marsden. The occasions meant for him merely a perfunctory discharge of duty; to the ingénue, however, they were supreme events. They were also arduous ideals; for she never could sleep the night before and always cried miserably the night after.

On the day following the première of "The Mother's Heart," the great director chose Pierre's. He had some difficulty in preserving, throughout the meal, his customary public attitude of paternal solicitude for Miss Marsden. The girl's blind devotion to him and his gentle air of the courtly protector had made a profound impression on the world at large.

"Of course she's desperately in love with him, poor thing; but he just thinks of her as a daughter—nowadays"; that was the current interpretation of the matter.

Myrtle was delicate; her admirers pushed her fragility to the last ditch and insisted that she was dying of consumption. This rumor of a pulmonary complaint had long since reached Hastings' ears; he acted accordingly. A special table, to which no puff of draft could reach, was always chosen by him for their luncheons; he made a point, every so often, of ordering her to throw her wrap over her shoulders. If she sneezed or coughed, an expression of anguished pity softened his usually firm features. It never struck people as strange that, in working hours, Hastings had no objection whatever to see-

ing her buried in snowdrifts or pushed through air-holes in the ice.

It was queer but today Hastings felt disgruntled, disgusted with life. "The Mother's Heart" had become the topic of the hour; the box-office was being besieged by the populace. Moreover, the Baumfeld deal had come to a most gratifying close. Still, Hastings was depressed, gloomy in the extreme. He wanted to groan aloud each time the waiter placed an exotic and succulent dish before him. The better a thing tasted the more discouraged he became. Desperately, he was striving to disregard the ravenous demands of his hunger.

"Why, Maxwell!" Miss Marsden protested at last, her beautiful expressionless black eyes very wide open, her whole face struggling to express anxiety but finding it difficult with the features available, "you're eating almost *nothing*. Aren't you feeling well? Have you lost your appetite?"

He gave her a sullen look.

"On the contrary," he informed her peevishly, "my appetite has never been better."

"Then—then *why*?" she faltered.

"Never mind why. You wouldn't understand." Thus he silenced her.

"You wouldn't understand" never failed to cow Myrtle; its effect had always been instantaneous. It was, so to speak, a mental box on the ears.

Hastings' fits of moodiness, his frequent sulks, could pretty generally be traced to something his brazen, bedizened mother had said. She had been the one blight, the one corrosive irritant in his life. Why couldn't he, of all men, have had a conventional, regulation mother? Perhaps the thwarting in him of the true filial urge had had much to do with the passionate completeness of the connection between parent and child in his screen-dramas. His relations with his own mother had been a pitiful mockery from the very start. And now! The shameless creature's scheme of victimizing him with an out-and-out blackmail plot—that was the one adequate name for her machi-

nations—was distressing enough, in all conscience. At the present moment, though, it wasn't the shrewd financial policy of the woman that rankled; it was rather her grim prophecy of imminent obesity. Certainly Hastings' mother was a far cry from dear old Mrs. Brown. This particular parental heart must have been hewn from everlasting flint.

Poor patient Myrtle had sufficient intelligence to realize that something was wrong. She sought desperately to soothe the great man by quoting from the morning reviews of "The Mother's Heart." She had spent hours and hours learning the most favorable criticisms; she was soon aware, however, that her monotonous recitations had, not a quieting, but a rasping effect on Hastings' nerves. She therefore gave up her attempts at entertainment and contented herself with merely gazing plaintively at her host. When at last he ceased to give his baffled attention to the tantalizing fare and focused his stern gaze on Myrtle's face, she suddenly flushed, looked frightened and guilty and pressed her lips together as if to fight back a flood of tears.

"So you've got something on *your* mind, too!" Hastings challenged her brusquely. "What's the matter?"

He knew what the girl's obvious panic meant. Her few vacillating attempts in the past to call her soul her own had all reduced her to just this state of quaking terror.

"Oh, Maxwell!" She struck an imploring note at once. "Somebody—a *good* man—wants to marry me. I don't know what to do about it. I'm all at sea."

Hastings raised polite, inquisitive eyebrows. He was not the man to let her perceive that he considered as a sign of disloyalty this apparent willingness on her part to form new ties.

"I see." He weighed her words with a majestic gravity. "And you love him, Myrtle?"

Tears welled into her eyes.

"Please don't ask me that question, Maxwell," she pleaded. "I couldn't

answer; it wouldn't be fair—to him."

Hastings, at this eloquent hint, let his expression soften. For the first time today, he somewhat resembled the devoted protector.

"Does the man know your story? Have you told him—about *us*?" he asked, proudly conscious now of the dramatic values in the situation and of his courage in forging straight to the painful point.

"Oh, no, Maxwell!" Her lashes fluttered madly. "I'm such a coward. I tried to think up ways of telling him—but I just couldn't. And all that happened so long ago."

"I really don't know what to advise, I'm sure." Hastings assumed a judicial air, his fine brows knitted. "It all comes down to the one question, I think: Will you be happier with him or *without* him?"

"Oh, I don't know, Maxwell." The girl's whisper was half a whimper. "If I thought for a minute that there was still a chance—" She broke off, her lips trembling.

They were silent for a time. Hastings knew quite well how to complete her last sentence. When he next spoke, it was with a deliberate dignity; he had waved aside her feeble plea.

"You know, Myrtle," he reminded her, "that I disapprove of artists marrying. A splitting up of interests is *not* wise."

She sighed and drooped wearily in her chair.

"Yes, I know, Maxwell," she returned. "But this marriage would be so different, you see. You would come *first*—always."

"I hope so—for your sake," Hastings informed her. "There's no question about it, Myrtle—you *have* a future in pictures." This was the greatest compliment Miss Marsden had ever received from the director—except, of course, when other people had been within ear-shot. "It would be a pity to scrap everything—for a man."

"That's dear of you, Maxwell," she quavered. "You *do* still believe in me—

honestly do you?" Her voice was pathetically eager.

It was characteristic of Hastings to become overcautious the moment after he had been betrayed into enthusiasm. In a way, it was a splendid trait; no one could claim that he indulged in empty flattery. A word of praise from Hastings meant more than a loose string of compliments from another man. Of course he may have been excessively conscientious; for, fearful that he had gone too far, he was apt to qualify and discount his original eulogy till it sounded almost like a disparagement. So now, with the unfortunate Myrtle!

"I believe," he followed up his train of thought, "we've got rid of all those queer little mannerisms that used to mar your work; we've rubbed your slate clean. Now we can find out," he elaborated the figure with ponderous care, "whether in future you'll chalk up something noteworthy. It would be a criminal waste to stop now, with a chance of positive achievement in front of you, Myrtle."

Miss Marsden humbly hung her head. She felt ashamed of herself for having interpreted so extravagantly the master's words of encouragement. Of course he *didn't* believe in her—yet. He was putting her on her honor for the future. At once, her faith in her powers faded out. She pouted anxiously.

"Oh, Maxwell!" she murmured. "I'm afraid you expect too much, really I do. I don't believe I could ever be a great actress. I get frightened when I think about it."

He smiled indulgently.

"*Don't* think about it, my dear girl," he soothed her. "Just leave all the worry and bother over future greatness to me. Let me see you through; then perhaps you'll wake up some morning and find the miracle's already happened. But remember! An artist's husband must be taught his place, Myrtle."

Her eyes, back of their unruly lashes, had a beseeching expression; she was silently imploring the great man's guidance. It was for him to govern as he

saw fit; Myrtle would claim no more control over her problematical future than if she had been a plain studio-prop.

At that moment, Hastings caught over Miss Marsden's shoulder, a glimpse of most exquisite, aurora-tinted ices in the hands of their waiter. Dessert—his favorite course—was approaching. In a downright panic, he impatiently waved the fattening tid-bits away; he knew that, once they got well within range, his spartan dietary resolutions would vanish.

Then, closing his eyes, he sighed out a confession of fatigue.

"I'm *dog-tired*," he admitted. "You don't mind if we go now, do you?"

"Why no!" Myrtle assured him.

Dessert was her favorite course, too. Since she had become famous, she had reluctantly given up ice-cream sodas as beneath her professional dignity; ices, however, had almost satisfied her insatiable craving. Still, she could eschew them without any very poignant regret—for Hastings' sake.

"I'm pretty tired, too, Maxwell." She smiled a sweet resignation to his wishes.

In his motor, Hastings again shut his eyes wearily.

"Sometimes I wish, Myrtle," he told her, a faint injured note in his voice, "that you had a *little* backbone. You don't seem to realize the extent of the responsibilities you make me shoulder."

"I'm so sorry." Myrtle was passionately contrite. "I know I'm a terrible bother. I'm *ten* times more trouble than I'm worth."

"Oh, well, never mind." His worried frown gave the lie to his words of comfort; it was obvious that he hoped to God she *would* mind, shunting her silly problems off on him this way. "I suppose you'd better marry the fellow; but, if you don't get on well, I really must refuse to act the referee."

"I promise, Maxwell, that if I'm not happy I'll never, never let on to you," she murmured.

He gave a short, scornful laugh.

"Of course, *that's* absurd, Myrtle," he commented. "You're miserable

right now; do you think I don't know it?"

"Oh—I *can't* help it. I wish I was dead," she wailed and burst into agonized tears.

"For heaven's sake, try to *act* as if you had common sense," the great man snapped petulantly. Leaning over, he tugged the shade down over the window of the motor at Myrtle's side. "This is plain damn-foolishness—right in public. Stop that crying this *minute*."

In his exasperation, he seemed positively on the point of cuffing her.

Even an hysterical display of emotion, on Myrtle's part, could be turned off, as by an electric switch, at Hastings' command. The poor girl got her handkerchief over her mouth, sniffed two or three times, and then became quiet.

"Good Lord!" He shrugged out his scorn of the whole ridiculous performance. "So you'll never let me know it, if you're unhappy? You'll keep it to yourself, eh? It looks like it now, I must say."

"I'll try, Maxwell—I'll try!" she faltered. "But to-day has been hard for me. When I'm married, it will be so different."

Hastings ignored this assurance.

"See here, Myrtle," he announced. "You'd better send the man to me. It will be the sensible thing for me to give him a frank talking-to. If I decide he can manage you, I shall give my consent. But I can't afford to have a nervous, unreasonable, unhappily married woman around the studio—that's obvious."

"Thank you, Maxwell—you're very kind," Myrtle returned, tremblingly docile. "I'll send him to you right away—or as soon as you're not too busy."

CHAPTER V

MAXWELL SKINNER HASTINGS was unfeignedly glad to get rid of Miss Marsden at the entrance to her apartment house. He tried hard, at the end, to appear gentle and forgiving; but Myrtle's stricken face showed that she guessed his impatience to see the last

of her today. She'd weep all the way up in the elevator, of course. Perhaps it would have been best to drive around town with her till she had got herself more effectively under control. Hastings, however, hadn't the time to act the nursemaid to the babyish ingénue. His jarred nerves cried out for rest. A nap was the paramount need right now. Besides, Myrtle's tears in the elevator would in no way lower the general estimate of his worth; after all, they might serve as most flattering publicity. And—here was another ingenious estimate of Myrtle's surrender to grief—people would be sure to connect her present sorrow and her imminent marriage. Thrown aside by Hastings, she had allowed the next man to snatch her up. So there it was! The truth would get into circulation without any need of preliminary tactics on the part of the director himself.

Lying on the bed in his darkened room, Hastings waited with closed eyes for the boon of sleep; he was doomed to wait in vain. The image of his mother shaped itself against the blackness; struggle as he might, he could not chase away the mocking figure. Naturally, his nerves remained taut and tense.

Secret understandings were pernicious things; Hastings had learned that fact too late, in his dealings with his mother. Since the keeping back of the truth had been all to his advantage, the compact of silence gave her a sinister control over him. She could have taken the whole world into her confidence without the slightest embarrassment. Her unfortunate son's sensitiveness had worked to his undoing. There were times now when he bitterly regretted his policy of concealment; it had delivered him up altogether into her blackmailing power—there could be no longer a doubt of that. Had people known how matters stood, they would in all probability have shown from the start a genuine pity for him; they would have understood his deplorable plight and made special efforts to extend a helping hand. Still, it was absurd to

goad himself into believing that he could ever have acted differently; granted his excessively refined nature, there had been but the one tolerable course. He could not have endured a public airing of his handicaps. Moreover, the world at large *wouldn't* have taken with any seriousness the endeavors of a man with such a frivolous, selfish, notorious mother. No, no—it would have been suicidal to acknowledge her.

Maxwell Skinner Hastings had always been ponderously serious in his views. At the age of seventeen, he had taken it upon himself to dismiss the decrepit tutor who had limped about after him for a decade from one end of Europe to the other and to take a steamer back to the States. A discreet exile from his native land had been the penalty he had paid for developing an inflexible moral standard before he was seven years old. His mother had been generous enough, to be sure; she would probably have kept him with her if he had shown in infancy any signs of easy-going tolerance. His constitutional sternness, however, had been too much for the gaiety-loving woman to stand; so off he'd gone to the continent!

Meanwhile his scatter-brained parent went on displaying her skittish charms to the New York theatregoers. Lydia Larrimie's sprightliness as a comedienne, however, depended to a large degree on breath-control; with advancing years and increasing weight, she had a tendency to pant her way through a part. The Broadway epicures had grown restive. With characteristic light-heartedness, she switched to musical comedy, thence soon to the position of vaudeville headliner. She was buoyantly filling this last niche in the temple of fame when her young son returned to New York to confer with her.

He had put it up to her at once that his chances of future fame would be jeopardized by her reputation. Neither he nor she blinked the fact that her moral course had been quite as erratic and variegated as her theatrical career; she had never bothered to steer by the bright north star of conventionality.

Indeed, she had turned in for recreation and relaxation at many a picturesque way station on her haphazard route. Not that she had avoided marriage; she could point with virtuous pride to three husbands. In explaining to her pedantic boy his origin, however, she had shamelessly pointed in quite another direction!

In the course of the crucial consultation, the mother learned that her son meant to doff his present name of James Leonard and to assume the dignified title of Maxwell Skinner Hastings. His scholarly young brain had also worked out the ingenious scheme for his future connection with the celebrated Lydia Larrimie. The project was broached by him in all solemnity and accepted by her in a mood of positive hilarity. It must never be known that he was her child—that was the first inflexible ruling. He would enter Harvard under his beautiful new name; during his four years as a student and during the critical period following, he was to be supplied with the necessary funds. Once he got on his feet, the rôles were to be reversed and he was to become the provider. It was all admirably businesslike—their donations to each other to be based on a certain percentage of sums earned.

That had been the secret agreement. Lydia had good-naturedly done her part toward the education and launching of the odd young man; and, for ten years now, Hastings had shouldered the burden of her maintenance. They'd never trusted each other for a single moment, however; there had been many a hot wrangle over allowances. But, on the whole, the arrangement had stood the test of time. The reason back of Hastings' present conviction that Lydia was a creature of blackmailing tendencies had a rather subtle bearing on the relative positions of the two in the scheme: for, whereas the man had never had a real hold over his mother, it was unfortunately true that she had *him* quite at her mercy. In those distant years when she had acted as financial backer, she could have repudiated

the agreement without the slightest inconvenience to herself; but, should Hastings attempt now to duck, Lydia could deal him a most damaging blow by publishing the truth. So, by a circuitous reasoning process, Maxwell Skinner Hastings had convinced himself that his mother's part of the bargain gave her a very unrighteous advantage over him.

Knowing her power, Lydia relied upon it indirectly. She knew only too well that her son, tied hand and foot as he was, must needs submit to petty indignities and insulting allusions. Her methods had at times an almost inquisitorial cruelty; it was as if she had strapped him to a chair and then proceeded to tickle the soles of his feet. The great director could not endure teasing; no man with a pompous consciousness of dignity submits gracefully to that sort of humiliation. And this woman's particular way of chivying her son was really just as vulgar as actual nose-tweaking; she was unable to utter three sentences without lugging in some grossly personal remark. Ah—the man's life was at times well-nigh insupportable!

Hastings had always been proud of his rangy lankness; it had lent him a sort of professional austerity. Very few of the important men in the motion picture industry had managed to keep their figures; indeed, hardly any of them had ever *had* figures to keep. In the top rank of all professions, slenderness is seldom found. Prosperity and obesity usually go together. Hastings' spare ruggedness had been a unique asset, winning for him the title of "the intellectual director." The character sketch of the great man in the illustrated souvenir program of "The Mother's Heart" contained this description: "Big, raw-boned, athletic, energetic. A powerful frame, not an ounce of superfluous flesh. Favorite outdoor sports—tennis, skiing; favorite indoor sports—the study of philosophy and the working out of knotty problems in the directing of super-films. Eats sometimes, drinks nine cups of black coffee

a day. Doesn't know the meaning of the word 'leisure.' "

Hastings had been delighted with the genially complimentary tone of that pithy jotting. Though he had written it himself, he felt somehow as if he had merely taken it down at the dictation of an adoring public. In the main, it was a truthful appreciation. Of course, he hadn't taken any exercise for ten years; still, if he could have spared the time, he *would* have played tennis and done simply glorious skiing.

Other items in the sketch, too, had resulted from the tapping of his rich imagination; but psychologically it was all quite sound. The fact that he often showed up at a rather late hour at the studio in no way indicated a lack of energy; when he slept till noon, it was because of sheer exhaustion, not laziness. The black coffee yarn had long been an accepted legend; it had got into circulation years ago. One day Hastings *had* drunk nine cups during the last fearful hours of re-takes on his first really great picture. The papers had got hold of the story; the world at large had seized on it with avidity and misconstrued it to mean the director's daily ration. A reckless use of stimulants to keep the machinery of the body functioning at an incredible, vertiginous velocity—so the Hastings admirers interpreted the habit.

Awake on his bed through the interminable hours of the afternoon that followed the première of "The Mother's Heart," the great man repeated again and again his brief autobiographical study. With his mother's mean, despicable little taunts still ringing in his ears, however, he got but a sorry relief from the reiteration of the terse eulogy. The shameless woman's constant dwelling on his weight had at last jugged him out of his usual equilibrium. Sneer at her aspersions as he might, he yet felt a certain quaking terror. He hadn't gained a pound—he knew it, he *knew* it. The scales had registered the traditional hundred and seventy the last time he had stepped buoyantly upon them. There wasn't the slightest cause

for concern. Still! It *had* been four months since he had dared to face the dial of the machine.

He was cherishing with something like desperation a comfort that might no longer be rightfully his. In the past, he had followed the swift course of the black arrow with such assurance; there had never been a doubt in his mind that it would come to a vibrant pause at just the proper point. Now, he had to admit bitterly, he would hang upon the issue in a positive panic. The most palpable lies, if only they were uttered persistently, could play havoc with a man's nerves. His mother's system had proved that for all time.

It was only gradually that Hastings, in his session of unhappy self-communion, came to realize that his general sense of discomfort was not altogether due to mental and spiritual unrest. The trouble could also be traced, in some degree, to his body. Concentrating on the physical ache, he at last located it definitely; it proved to be a queer gnawing sensation at the very pit of his stomach. Invisible hands seemed to be kneading and wringing his insides. It was extraordinary! He had never been ill; he had no power to place symptoms. He shut his eyes, determined to ferret out a diagnosis. Then, for the first time that afternoon, his mother's image faded out, to be replaced all at once by a vivid vision—a china plate upon which rested a half dozen small but intricately moulded pastries and a slender glass filled with pink ice. With an exclamation of impatience, Maxwell Skinner Sprang up from his bed. His physical pangs were explained. He had eaten practically nothing this whole day and he was on the verge of starvation.

The prospect of a meal had an instantaneous effect on Hastings' confused state of mind. His perplexities, his mental turmoil, gave way; all thought processes came to an abrupt termination. The acute need of nourishment, recognized fully at last and permitted to assert itself at the supreme demand of the moment, banished less palpable problems in a trice. Hastings

rang peremptorily for his man Jobs and stopped him on the threshold with a fierce demand for food—and at once. The great director's attitude had more than a touch of petulance; it sounded as if he were berating the docile servant, branding him as incompetent because he had not got telepathically, down in the basement of the house, the passionate need of the master's digestive organs.

The obedient menial wheezed out an apology for his shortcomings and waddled away with a promise to redeem himself. He'd fix things up in a jiffy, *indeed* he would. He proved to be as good as his word. Hastings had no sooner got into his clothes and entered the library than the patient Jobs appeared on the threshold like a good-natured rotund genii in a cloud of wholesome smelling steam.

The old man *was* of an admirable efficiency when it came to loading down a tray at a moment's notice. Hastings was equally expeditious at doing the unloading. He ate with an absolute absorption. Jobs, beside the desk, watched the swift consumption of food and displayed a timid satisfaction at this silent tribute to his culinary skill; silent tributes were all the domestics in this establishment ever got for their pains.

At last Hastings confessed with a deep-drawn sigh to a state of repletion. Throwing himself back in his chair, he yawned and stretched and ran a lazy eye over the empty plates rather in the manner of a sleek tomcat that takes a last luxurious glance at the few feathers and bones which have once helped to compose a fat robin. Then suddenly his jaws snapped shut and a look of gloom descended upon his features. He had just noticed, under his left elbow, the typewritten statement his mother had delivered in person that morning; at once, her blondined image surged up before him again. The concoctions inside him no longer gave him a sense of delicious, indolent well-being; he recalled only their messy, indigestible qualities. He ceased to chew his cud, as it were. Viewing the empty plates

now with a sardonic sneer, he sprang to his feet and began to stride up and down.

Jobs, painstakingly oblivious of his master's restlessness, straightened the papers on the desk, then took up the tray and tiptoed toward the door.

"Oh—Jobs!" Hastings paused in his promenade. "How are you feeling now?"

His voice showed of a sudden a warm solicitude.

The question was of so unexpected a nature that the discreet servant with difficulty stifled an exclamation of astonishment.

"Thank you very much, sir," he mumbled, ducking a grateful head. "I'm better, sir."

"I'm glad to hear it, Jobs." Hastings smiled indulgently. "The treatments have made a new man of you—eh?"

"Well," Jobs considered it, "they helped, sir; but I didn't have the time to keep up with them. I had to stop them or stop everything else. A man like me, Mr. Hastings, can't give up most of his work and *all* his amusements, too."

"Of course not," his master admitted.

"And you said, sir," Jobs humbly pursued, "that I wasn't to go to the doctor's office in working hours."

"Yes, I know." Hastings nodded a sad agreement. "We men haven't the time to be sick, Jobs. Illness is woman's privilege."

He rather regretted the waste of that epigram on a servant and wondered vaguely where he might use it again.

"And the doctor," Jones elucidated, "gave me so many things to do by myself—exercises and deep breathing—that they took up all my spare time. So if I couldn't go to his office in working hours, I couldn't go at all, sir." He beamed out his appreciation of his relentless logic. "And the expense, Mr. Hastings! It was taking more than I earned."

"Dear, dear!" Hastings showed a shocked surprise. "Was it *that* bad, Jobs?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Hastings. And nothing to make up to a man for the torments he went through. What I wanted to eat I mustn't eat; and what I wanted to do I mustn't *do*. I'm a sociable sort, sir; I couldn't stand it. And the doctor hurt, with his rubbing me this way and rubbing me that way."

Jobs illustrated eloquently the drastic massage he had undergone.

"It did take me down ten pounds," he admitted. "But since I've stopped, I've gone up twelve already." He gave his paunch a despairing pat. "I tell you, sir, there's only one remedy for me—and that ain't a real remedy and it seems a shameful thing."

He paused, waiting droopingly for his cue.

"Well," Hastings supplied it rather anxiously, "what do you mean by that, Jobs?"

Jobs tiptoed two furtive steps nearer his master and whispered:

"Corsets, Mr. Hastings—the kind they make for men."

Hastings turned away at that with an impatient shrug of the shoulders. "That will do, Jobs." His voice at present was full of fierce command. "You may go now. I'm sorry your treatments failed."

It was obvious that he considered the perplexed Jobs had overstepped the mark in his vulgar confessions.

Left alone, he found himself admitting for the first time the quixotic hopes he had based on his butler's course of treatments. He had never before confessed openly the extent of his anxious curiosity. Until today, he had retained sufficient self-respect to refrain from putting to Jobs even the most casual question as to his progress under the new doctor. To be sure, he *had* urged the obedient fellow into the thing; but he hadn't acknowledged for a moment that it might be an experimental step, with Jobs assuming the rôle of a patient guinea-pig in a laboratory. Had he considered the matter in that light, of course he would have *paid* the man for acting the pioneer. This afternoon, however, he had been in such a discour-

aged mood that, without weighing the consequences, he had impulsively thrown himself on a menial's mercy. Craving comfort, he had sought it from any quarter; and, instead of obtaining relief he had got, defenceless as he was, a brutal body-blow. For this he had sacrificed his dignity!

"Good God!" Maxwell Skinner Hastings groaned aloud and sank into the nearest chair. Even his mother, for all her malicious cruelty, had never gone so far as to hint at the ignominious possibility of corsets!

CHAPTER VI

MYRTLE MARSDEN'S young swain was granted his critical interview after a succession of rather irritating delays. Though Hastings had gradually recovered his solemn equanimity during the week that followed the first showing of "The Mother's Heart," he still felt in an aggrieved mood. The great man did not always allow his sense of fairness to win out over the less noble trait of grumpy peevishness. The fact that poor Myrtle had no connection with his present problems did not make the slightest difference; she just happened to be the one victim available for the venting of his spleen. He therefore would set the hour for his talk with John Newton and then, at the last moment, trump up another and more vital engagement. Of course, the impressionable Miss Marsden grew increasingly hysterical under the suspense. Keeping her on tenter-hooks gave Hastings a certain grim satisfaction; it enabled him to coax back his usual conviction of power and stern authority.

When he at last received the young man, Hastings was once again at his most lordly. The meeting took place in the director's office just off the enormous studio where the interior scenes of "The Mother's Heart" had been snapped. Hastings had considered that his own house would have made too informal a setting; having the consultation at the big structure in West Forty-seventh Street insured a greater

austerity. It forbade the possibility of a mere chat as between friends; it lent the occasion the atmosphere of a presentation in the temple. Hastings did go so far as to shake Newton's hand; but otherwise he acted with a sort of pontifical aloofness. Waving the small fry—the secretaries and stenographers—out of the room, he had come at once to the point.

"Miss Marsden has told me," he announced, "that you wish to marry her."

"I do." Newton spoke with a loud assurance.

Hastings smiled enigmatically; he was of course aware that the fellow's present aggressive attitude showed a very young, utterly futile struggle against succumbing with the proper humility to a bigger man's authority.

"Myrtle has asked me, Newton," he pursued with suave dignity, "to look you over, as it were. She regards me rather in the light of—er—" he paused to pick out the felicitous word—"a guardian."

Newton, who resembled a big, boyish Viking with his short blond hair and his bright blue eyes and his general sculpturesque massiveness, thrust out his under-lip scornfully.

"What the hell's Myrtle got to do with a guardian?" he wanted to know.

"I haven't much time to give you this afternoon," Hastings informed him sternly, "but I think I can explain that point in a very few minutes."

"You kept me waiting a week, don't forget," Newton challenged him sulkily.

Hastings paid no heed to this protest.

"Miss Marsden and I," he elucidated with a judicial coldness, "are, first of all, artists. Everything else is of secondary importance to us."

"It'll be different now—as far as Myrtle's concerned." Her Viking was brusque. "I'll come first. Art will come second—if it comes at all."

"Oh, no!" Hastings shook a deprecatory head. "There you are mistaken. An artist's husband isn't the same as an ordinary *woman's* husband. Come now, Newton; do be reasonable. We've met today to talk over facts;

and facts seem to be distasteful to you."

"I don't like *your* way of putting the facts—that's the point," Newton grumbled.

"But after all, there's only the one way to look at the matter sanely." Hastings was haughty. "You won't get Myrtle without my consent, you know. I have managed the girl's affairs for years and years. Since my influence has been of genuine help in the past, the chances are it will continue to be valuable. That's Myrtle's idea, at any rate. If it's not yours, we'd best call our talk off right now." The great man cleared his throat and let his gaze drift to the closed door. "I have little patience with discussions that get *nowhere*."

Newton, clumsily petulant, shuffled his feet.

"I fail to see any sense in this guardianship arrangement," he persisted. "Why can't Myrtle choose, without having to run after your advice?"

"Whatever you think of it, the arrangement *stands*," Hastings reminded him tartly. "I have no objection to ridding myself of a very difficult responsibility. The girl isn't indispensable to my future, remember. She feels, however, that I *am* necessary to hers. So there we are! Myrtle refuses to take this step without my consent; and naturally I can't hand her over to you unless I have some assurance of your reliability and discretion." No father, with his only child's welfare at heart, could have voiced his demands more reasonably, Hastings felt.

At that moment, Newton without warning jumped to his feet, strode over to the smoothly insulting Hastings and, planting himself down on the desk, leaned very close to the master.

"See here, Hastings," he announced, his blue eyes hot and bright, "is there anything *back* of all this?"

As he spoke, he laid a disconcertingly heavy hand on the other man's shoulder.

The swift fear of possible indignities to his person did much to soften Hastings' mood. His personal regard for

Myrtle waxed to a positive enthusiasm at once.

"My dear *chap!*" he expostulated, managing, without any apparent sacrifice of his compelling dignity, to transform his sneer into an indulgent smile. "I had no idea you could interpret my care—" He broke off and shook an almost playfully remonstrative head at the blond boor. "Myrtle Marsden is the *best* young woman that ever lived. There's never been a word breathed against her."

The statement rang gloriously true. Hastings, aware that Newton's grip on his shoulder was relaxing, expanded his chest in pride. "Evidently you haven't heard that every contract I sign with my actors contains a so-called 'morality' clause."

Newton considered this with a glowering intensity.

"Lots of 'morality' clauses have been known to apply to everybody but the big boss," he growled.

He was stubbornly refusing to be convinced; the grasp of his fingers tightened once more.

Hastings elevated indignant brows at the vulgarity of that last challenge.

"Be careful, Newton. Take heed what you say," he warned. "If you have a serious charge, speak it out like a man."

His words had an absolute conviction. Having directed scores of villains in his pictures, Hastings had a thorough knowledge of plausible wiles. The simulation of injured dignity had never failed yet to convince a simple hero. Fortified by that recollection, the experienced director was able to keep his head in the present crisis and to achieve an air of superb integrity.

"You say you love the girl," he wound up on a fervent note with a leader from "The Mother's Heart." "For God's sake, try to *believe* in her."

"Oh, I suppose I do believe in her." Newton released Hastings and, kicking out a staccato tattoo with his heels against the desk, gave a rather rueful shrug. "I'm sorry I behaved like an ass. Yes—*Myrtle's* all right."

The concession did not include Hastings. The young man's exoneration of his adored Miss Marsden carried the obvious suggestion that she had gallantly withstood temptation. Her guardian received an ugly glare that pointed with niceness just *whose* dishonorable advances were implied.

Hastings, being in a conciliatory frame of mind, ignored his companion's crass breach of etiquette. With an attempt to appear casual, he pushed his chair inch by inch out of Newton's reach.

Then he remarked, measuring his words painstakingly:

"Of course, your *loving* Myrtle is all that counts, after all, Newton. Perhaps you haven't realized it—but I've been testing you out this afternoon, somewhat in the same way I try a new artist."

His smile had a paternal blandness now. "I *think* you'll qualify." He was ponderously arch. "You may tell Myrtle she has my consent and my blessing."

Newton's reply took the form of a bearish grunt. He jumped unceremoniously off the desk and, ignoring the proffered hand of the great man, marched with a martial tread out of the room and slammed the door after him.

CHAPTER VII

MYRTLE'S affairs somehow hadn't progressed in quite the way Hastings would have liked. The manner in which the newspapers published the engagement would, under normal circumstances, have pleased the girl's guardian. The large central photograph, in each case, was of Hastings—his favorite camera study, the one with the expression of melancholy around the eyes; he was flanked, on left and right, by smaller pictures of Miss Marsden and young Newton. The reading matter, too, gave much more space to the director's career than to the actual love-affair of his beautiful protégée. For the first time, however, Hastings wished the

journals had kept him out of the business. Newton had proved, on acquaintance, to be such a perverse fellow that the other man's prominence in the press accounts might conceivably arouse his ire. The cub had a tremendous amount of conceit—there was no question about it; and, granted his vain nature, it was really only natural that he should have expected the lion's share of publicity for himself.

Hastings' anxiety was heightened by certain tremulous confessions of Myrtle. He had taken it upon himself to call at her apartment one afternoon and deliver his formal consent. In the course of the conversation, he had dropped an elaborately casual hint.

"Newton is a thoroughly nice, likable chap," he had remarked. "He seems very impulsive, though. Nothing could possibly be gained—and everything might be sacrificed—if you should tell him about *us*. He wouldn't understand the conditions; he wouldn't realize the absolute inevitability of the whole thing."

"Oh, no, he wouldn't understand, Maxwell," Myrtle had agreed. "And then," this by way of wistful vindication, "all that happened so long ago I honestly feel it never *did* happen."

"Yes—he's hot-headed, he's a simple sort; and some secrets *can't* be adequately explained." Hastings voiced his genuine regret that the past, with its intricate entanglements, must be forever kept away from the likable young chap's scrutiny.

Myrtle blinked her lashes at a mad rate.

"There are times when I think he suspects," she faltered. "And then—oh, Maxwell!—he frightens me so. If he found out, he'd simply go *insane*, I know he would."

"Nonsense, Myrtle!" Hastings had sought desperately to achieve a tone of amused protest but somehow had fallen just short of the proper light-heartedness.

He had left Myrtle's apartment in a mood of irritation. He had never before been so fully convinced of the girl's utter stupidity. Hitherto he had

forced himself to make certain chivalrous allowances for her pitiful lack of character. He'd been too much the gentleman to allow his intelligence full play over her deficiencies. At present, however, he could not restrain his lively critical faculties. His mother was right—Myrtle was a plain damned fool. He could not, for the life of him, understand how he had ever forgotten his dignity so far as to get himself involved with such a puling nonentity.

Of course, the whole thing had resulted from sheer unreasonable pity on his part; Myrtle, despite her insipidity and girlish silliness, had been from the beginning the actual aggressor. Her health, her very existence depended on his favor; naturally he had yielded at last. And now he was paying the penalty for his humanity. He reflected to-day that, once the marriage was accomplished, he would speedily assert himself with an inflexible sternness. He would wash his hands of Myrtle's affairs; he would prevail upon Newton to make her give up her artistic career. He never wanted to see her again; he'd be more than willing to train up a new ingénue. In six months, he could teach an intelligent young woman all the tricks it had cost years and years of patient effort to drill into the dull Marsden brain. Thank God, after all, for the obnoxious Newton!

But if the fellow turned ugly? That was the exasperating problem. Hastings had in the past often conjured up a possible lover for Myrtle who would be willing to take over, in part at least, the burden of her. This hypothetical swain had been little more than a masculine counterpart of the girl herself, somebody to sit at the Hastings feet and hang upon the words of wisdom that emerged from the Hastings lips. The great man had, time and again, rehearsed a poignant scene wherein he himself, having thrown an arm over the reverent youth's shoulder, would gently, tactfully vouchsafe the illicit facts of the bygone entanglement. He had had an idea that this admission of guilt would heighten the girl's value in her

lover's eyes and make the boy proud to consider whose successor he would be! And Myrtle had bungled everything, like the brainless simpleton she was; she had not waited for the arrival of the desired milk-sop but had chosen a brawny, roistering, quarrelsome athlete. Well, if it all ended peacefully in marriage, she would pay for her miserable folly!

For days, anxious misgivings as to the termination of the engagement persisted in Hastings' mind; they even banished the rankling problems of his mother and his weight. At length, however, the quiet passage of time brought an increasing sense of security. The closer Newton got to the nuptial morning, the less he'd be apt to regard the past; his thoughts at present would naturally focus straight on the future. Hastings had in the end recovered his usual confidence; moreover, he obtained the sweetest satisfaction at the prospect of poor cheated Myrtle as the other fellow's wife. He was already looking forward to the coaching of that new ingénue.

It was strange that Maxwell Skinner Hastings, having relied on the tactics of his cinema villains to get himself out of his difficulties with Newton, should have failed to face the fact that all such plausible rogues ended ignominiously. He had handed over to Myrtle's suitor the rôle of hero; but he had forgotten to contemplate squarely the inevitable dénouement.

Then, one morning as Hastings lay in bed and sipped his breakfast coffee, the door of the room had burst open with an explosive report and John Newton had stridden over the threshold. One glance at the intruder's brick-red face had been sufficient to convince the great director that the last reel of the romance was scheduled to be run off then and there. He suddenly became giddy; everything turned to a swirling blur and he heard the clatter of the cup he had tremulously set down in its saucer. Despite his sick daze, he attempted with desperation to assume an insolent defiance—an axiomatic trait of

trapped villains. He could almost hear his own voice shouting out traditional directions from behind a camera: "Lean over nonchalantly, keep that sneer and place the cup and saucer on the night-table." With a hand that shook uncontrollably, he tried to carry out the order; but the cup all at once slid off the saucer and landed upside down on the bed-covers.

At the same moment, Hastings heard a soft thud; Newton had sat down on the mattress. His hot blue eyes weren't half an inch distant now from those of the distracted director. Funny! There'd been no actual physical violence yet. This sudden thought brought no comfort with it, however. Hastings felt as if the bones of his notoriously gaunt frame had all melted; he had a queer sense of being just an amorphous mass of protoplasm.

A voice, very far away, was speaking now. "You dirty beast!"

The perplexed Hastings nodded a wobbly head to indicate that the words had a familiar sound. His present peril was still all mixed up in his head with his professional experience; with a well-nigh objective sagacity, he was thinking, "That's old; the public's tired of that phrase, 'dirty beast.'"

"I'm going to give you one big order this morning," the distant voice pursued. "You're to *marry* Myrtle Marsden the minute you've got back enough strength to take you to the City Hall. Do you get that?"

Hastings, still wondering anxiously what had become of his spine, achieved another leaden nod.

"All right. Now I'm going to whip you—just to give you an idea what to expect if you try to go back on your bargain."

At this juncture, the fact that Newton's last speech was also "old stuff" failed to strike Hastings. He had lost cognizance now of everything but the stark reality. Brawny arms fastened around him. He was conscious of being heaved high out of bed; the next moment, he had landed on his back on the floor. All his vital organs seemed

to have been crowded up under his rib-case from the force of the impact. He heard a piercing scream. Then he took a straight header into the bottomless pit of oblivion.

CHAPTER VIII

THE Maxwell Skinner Hastings had returned to their New York house after three weeks in the South. The great director had suffered a complete nervous breakdown as a result of the prodigious labor expended on "The Mother's Heart." The symptoms of the collapse had been unique: a general purplish discoloration about the face, particularly in the vicinity of the eyes, combined with queer puffy swellings. These details of the painful illness were kept out of the newspapers. Hastings' admirers knew only that their idol was prostrate from overwork and that on his bed of suffering he had romantically wedded his patient ingénue.

Myrtle's dumb adoration had been a great comfort during the first stages of her guardian's illness. She had been kneeling at his side when he returned to consciousness; her cheeks were stained with tears and her lashes were fluttering.

"I hate him, I *hate* him, Maxwell!" she had cried.

"He gave me no chance—to defend myself," Hastings had told her, his voice thick and blubbery, owing to the great size of his upper lip.

Myrtle had given this explanation absolute credence.

"He's a coward. Oh, I do *hate* him, Maxwell," she had returned.

Later that day, Hastings had asked rather anxiously for particulars.

"When did you see Newton last?" he'd wanted to know.

"Yesterday—and he was happy and kind. Then this morning he telephoned. All he had to say was, 'You'd better go right over to Hastings' house. He needs a nurse. Good-bye.'"

So the director had been able to couch his proposal of marriage in such

a way as to make it seem merely a generous reward for faithful service.

"Be your *wife*, Maxwell!" Myrtle had faltered. "I—I can't believe it. I don't understand."

"No—you *wouldn't* understand," Hastings had commented rather peevishly and turned his back on her.

Myrtle in the rôle of nurse had been a sweetly consoling presence. With convalescence, however, Hastings had come to look upon her less charitably. After all, she was useful only as a meek creature to be cuffed about and trodden on; and the great man had been able to vent on her his spleen against others quite satisfactorily in the past. She couldn't accept more, as Mrs. Hastings, than she'd accepted as Miss Marsden. Of course, he did not phrase his thoughts just in this way; he simply reflected that the marriage was a futile, exasperating arrangement. Myrtle could never qualify as a man's life-companion; and, for all her stupidity, she herself realized that.

By the time they returned to New York, Myrtle's position was just what it had been for the last five years, except that she had gained the one immeasurable boon of the Hastings name and had forfeited forever the privilege of lunching in public with the famous man.

Two days after his arrival in town, Hastings received a visit from his mother. He was in an ugly mood. Herr Rosenthal's most recent picture had been shown, the previous evening, at one of the big cinema houses. The reviews in the morning papers were decidedly favorable. "A refreshing lack of mawkish sentimentality," had been the delighted verdict of the capricious critics. "At last something to give pleasure to an intelligent public!" one turncoat exclaimed. "If we get many films like this, we shall all be heartily ashamed of our gush over the gilded hokem of our own master-director, Maxwell Skinner Hastings. I, for one, felt as if I'd suddenly been promoted from the kindergarten to the grown-up class. I'm already reluctant to admit that I've

seen 'The Mother's Heart' five times." So it went. The journalists, fickle as usual, had left off hammering out pæans of praise for Hastings and had begun to toll his death-knell. More than one paper struck a positively sinister note. "We'd like to ferret out the hundred-percent patriotic American who's backing Rosenthal for profit but who doesn't dare to admit his share in the noble scheme."

Ah, it was all hideously unjust; it destroyed at a single blow a man's faith in the stability of human nature. For once, Hastings had been mistaken about his public. This time he should have been heroically bold, not meticulously tactful, in his service to his Art. Now, of course, he could *never* come forward with a benevolent gesture and confess his altruistic share in the Rosenthal deal. The treacherous journalists had tied his hands by branding with sordid selfishness the German's anonymous angel.

"Good morning, Maxwell." His brazen old mother, on the threshold, interrupted his bitter reflections.

With an obviously panicky haste, the great man jumped to his feet and, striding over to the wall, leaned his back against it.

But the discerning Lydia was not to be fooled; she had at once got the significance of her son's move. Shaking a solicitous head, she had announced, "They won't do, Max—they really *won't*."

"*What* won't?" he challenged her fiercely.

She showed wide-eyed surprise at his failure to comprehend her words.

"Why—those stays!" she informed him. "There's a most *decided* line across the back of your coat; nobody could mistake it. And, do you know, that's about the one thing people won't stand for. Oh, no; they won't do."

Hastings at that plunged forward, one arm raised threateningly. "Be quiet, do you hear, or I'll—"

"Would you strike your own mother?" she asked in gentle sorrow. "If you'll only have the patience to sit down and hear the service I've done you, you'll be

ashamed to *think* of such a dreadful impulse."

Her son, throwing himself into his desk-chair, snapped: "Well, what have you come for? Be quick; I'm very busy today."

She laughed. "You always tell me that; and you know I always stay just as long as I please. However, I have some shopping this morning; I won't sit down, thanks."

She took up her position before the mantel mirror.

"The point is," she remarked at length, "things have turned out so well that I can't resist taking the credit due me. I'm only human, after all."

"I wasn't aware of any great good fortune coming *my* way," Hastings informed her sharply.

"Of course, I disagree there," she protested. "I've said from the start, remember, that your whole future depended on your marrying Marsden. It was the only solution for a man like you. No matter how much you may complain of the bargain, I shall never regret bringing you together. I'm a *very* proud match-maker."

As she spoke, she deftly applied a bit of lip-rouge and, taking three steps backward measured the effect.

"I'm sure I don't know what you're driving at." Hastings was haughtily impatient. "I was ill; I needed attention. I decided that Myrtle was the one person who really cared for me in an unselfish way. So I married her. I can't quite see where *you* come in."

His mother ignored this speech; she seemed to be confiding in her image.

"I will admit that I didn't expect things to turn out just as they did," she murmured. "I told myself it *might* mean a black eye or two for you; but I had no idea he was the sort to beat a man so unmercifully."

She twitched her nose-veil 'off the rim of her hat and examined her lips through the mesh.

"Good God!" Hastings groaned. "What have you done to me *now*?" He no longer had the desire to strike the incorrigible woman; he felt merely a

heavy depression, a miserable impotence to cope with a malicious world.

"Nobody loathes anonymous letters, written to *harm* people, more than I," Lydia went on to explain. "But in this case, there was only the one way to work good—and naturally I took that way. It was a very brief note; I didn't waste a *single* word."

She flashed a proud smile through the mirror at Hastings.

"You wrote to John Newton." Hastings spoke with a dull, monotonous intonation. "You told him everything about Myrtle and me."

"Precisely." She nodded her agreement. "And I was very shrewd, Max. I pretended to be all on Marsden's side, you see. I stressed her simplicity—not her simple-mindedness—said it was a crying shame you'd refused to marry her—got positively eloquent over the girl, in fact. If I'd so much as *hinted* that I was working for your interest, that your salvation depended on having Myrtle as a wife, the Newton boy would have beaten you just the same—but *without* making you marry the little fool. Now then, Max!" She faced him with great earnestness. "Wasn't I

clever? Will you ever say again that your poor old mother has no genuine, unselfish affection for you?"

Hastings got wearily to his feet.

"Will you please get out now?" he asked with a feeble peevishness. "And will you please *stay* out? Since you've got my interest so at heart, let me suggest that you go abroad and never come back. Your allowance will reach you regularly."

"Oh, *Max!*" she cried. "You'll live to rue this harshness; indeed you will. I say it again—I don't regret in the least what I've done." But she paused for a moment at the threshold to qualify this statement. "Just one thing worries me. Often a man whose system's been shaken up like yours keeps right on gaining weight; of course that kind of fat is *not* healthy. If that happens, I'll never forgive myself, Max, never."

She waved a hand in wistful farewell. "But, anyhow, do take off those stays; they're such a sordid confession, such—"

Hastings took a frenzied step forward and the door shut smartly on the flow of her parental advice.

[THE END]



IN every cynic's life there is one woman exempt from his arrows, just as every Magdalen exempts one man while repenting.



TALENT is an infinite capacity for imitating genius.



Young Girls

By Paul Tanaquil

ATTHIS called for me shortly after sunset and we walked hand in hand to the river. Amid the rushes, I loosed my belt and slipped off my tunic; Atthis and I plunged together into the water.

My hair fell over my eyes, heavy as sleep, and when Atthis splashed my face with water it was as though I were being wakened an hour before the dawn. I swam after Atthis and we crossed the little stream to the spot where the old women were washing their linen on the opposite bank. And they looked at us as if we had done wrong: I blushed and felt on the point of crying, without knowing what it was of evil that had set the old women to whispering. . . .



Visitation

By David Morton

THE long, blue evening brings the golden moon
From out the reaches of old nameless lands,
To minds in need of beauty for a boon,
And hearts in need of healing at her hands.
Wearing as any queen her shadowy gown,
She comes in quiet to the grateful street,
A grave and thoughtful presence through the town,—
And peace is with the passing of her feet.

Into the grieved and fretful hearts of men,
The long-robed evening strays, a wanderer,
And there is rest and quietness again,
And the cool, scented loveliness of her,
Come lately, now, from old and weary lands,
Bearing this boon in beautiful, still hands.



Lindaman

By Carter Brooke Jones

I

LINDAMAN, the little clerk in charge of local records for the great firm of Dodwell, Inc., the national mercantile rating agency, quailed before the managerial presence of Mr. Black. Lindaman was receiving his daily scolding. He always quailed on these occasions, used to them as he was. He stood now in a resigned posture, but uncomfortably, like a man turning the other cheek under the direction of a pointed pistol.

"It would seem," said Mr. Black, "that you'd remember some of the things I tell you."

"Well, sometimes I forget," returned Lindaman lamely.

"Sometimes you don't forget," retorted Mr. Black triumphantly.

Lindaman laughed weakly.

Mr. Black added: "I don't want to be calling you down all the time. I want harmony in this office. But, of all things, we must have efficiency. I've striven for it all these years, but it seems I'm never to get it. Now then. If you can't get that department to going efficiently, perhaps I can get someone that will."

Lindaman suffered this threat in meek silence. He waited unhappily for the interview to end, shifting his weight from one foot to the other. Nothing more was said, and he started away, but at Mr. Black's voice turned back like a faithful dog.

"It must be borne in mind," resumed Mr. Black, rolling out his words as if he addressed a large audience, "that the matter of keeping the records is quite as important as the business of compil-

ing them, as, in fact, that of providing the material that makes such records possible. It is a question of co-operation, from the president in the general offices in New York to the newest errand boy in our smallest branch office. If we have co-operation we will—work together, all will be well."

He looked inquiringly at Lindaman, who breathed like a prayer-book response, "I see."

"On the other hand," Mr. Black pointed out, "if we do not have co-operation, we will not work together; we will be reduced eventually to—to a condition bordering on chaos." Lindaman's expression was vague. "Therefore, Lindaman, I must insist that everything be in its appointed place, so that we may put our fingers on them when they are desired."

"I see," responded Lindaman.

Dismissed from the private office by gesture, he darted out unconvincingly. Somehow everything Lindaman did was unconvincing.

II

It was only after twenty years of conscientious service that Mr. Black had attained the pinnacle of city superintendent. He had entered Dodwell, Inc., as a filing clerk, and he loved to recount his steady ascension. He had been everything in the office; small wonder that he knew the business inside out.

As he sat complacently after administering the latest rebuke to Lindaman, he remembered how once he had performed Lindaman's duties. Lindaman lacked initiative, lacked everything else that made the successful business man.

Mr. Black recalled with satisfaction that he had revised the filing system when he was chief record clerk, and the vice-president himself, pausing on a tour of inspection, had praised the innovation. This had led to one promotion; the others had followed.

"He'll never get anywhere," thought Mr. Black of Lindaman; "he hasn't got it in him."

In some perverse way this pleased Mr. Black. There were others in the office so uncannily efficient, so conversant with every detail of the business, that they gave him the disquieting impression of being ready, any one of them, to oust him from his desk the moment he weakened with age or weariness. Of course he wanted efficiency. It had been his passion, his one consuming interest in life. He had studied the office from every angle, brooding over improvements, delighted if he discovered one, worried if he didn't. He had gone through the departments weeding out lazy or stupid or indifferent employes.

He wondered why Lindaman had lasted so long. Lindaman and efficiency had nothing in common. Probably it was the little man's faithfulness, his deference to his employer, his earnest effort to do his duty. One could excuse much from such persons. Yet carelessness was even worse than disrespect or languor or numskullery—more dangerous. It was not that others never incurred the superintendent's displeasure—they did and heard from it—but Lindaman was on the carpet far oftener than anyone. He had a talent for doing the wrong thing. His mistakes, too, were more readily revealed, for the records were in constant demand and any deviation from a perfect guardianship was as unconcealable as sour milk.

Mr. Black, bent over his elegant desk or drifting about the outer offices, would peer through critical horn-rimmed spectacles at every detail. Things must be just so. Otherwise they got on his nerves. The partial smoothness obtaining in most offices did not satisfy him. His idea of efficiency was mechanical perfection. He realized that matters of

judgment were open to controversy, and it was of secondary importance to him whether he agreed with the disposal of situations by the more responsible members of the firm. What he demanded was that the routine of the office, which did not involve deduction or hazard, move like a well-oiled engine. The larger questions of policy hardly worried him: when in doubt one always could appeal to New York. But when one's letters were badly typed or one's files misplaced it was inexcusable, maddening.

Mr. Black was known to the stenographers as the Comma-chaser, to the filing clerks as Old Index-Finger, to the office boys as Get-up-and-hop. They dreaded his approach.

A client might appear with the announcement that he had been insulted by the subscription manager, and Mr. Black might not say a word to the subscription manager. Mr. Black might fail to upbraid anyone when an infuriated manufacturer wanted to know why his business had been rated M-a-3 instead of L-b-4. But let a typist write a colon where Mr. Black had dictated a semi-colon, there was sure to be trouble.

III

LINDAMAN stood nervously before the executive desk.

"Do you mean to say," inquired Mr. Black, uttering his words slowly to enjoy them more, "that you, after all I've told you, have again placed a piece of correspondence relating to the Davidson Company among the files allotted to Davidson Brothers—an entirely different firm, as you well know? Answer me!"

Lindaman looked as if he had been accused of murdering an impoverished widow and her two children. His breath was hampered. His timid eyes were fixed on the floor.

"I guess I did, Mr. Black," he confessed, and braced himself for the sentence.

Lindaman was strangely helpless. One elbow protruded through his greasy old work coat. His scarcity of hair and his middle-aged face gave him little matu-

city. He seemed a truant small boy called to judgment by one of the race of adults.

Mr. Black, being a large man, rose to his full height, spread to his widest breadth, his sense of physical superiority adding to the power of his position. He glared with a contemptuous pity at this frail specimen of a hireling.

Lindaman was discharged.

"You will please leave day after tomorrow," directed Mr. Black. "You may draw two weeks' pay therefrom," he added, with a magnanimous gesture. "I already have your successor in mind, and he will report in two days."

Mr. Black did not have a successor in mind, but he determined to find one immediately. He did. It was a young fellow emerging from college.

IV

THE young fellow lasted about ten days. Mr. Black found him impossible. Next a man of thirty-five, with a voluble Adam's apple and a rapid, assertive way of talking. He brought glowing references and barely rounded out the week. Mr. Black then promoted one of the filing clerks, but being in charge of something gave this chap delusions of grandeur and led to blundering. Told to resume his old position, he quit in a huff. The fourth attempt to replace Lindaman resulted in Scoggins.

Scoggins was a polished jewel. In an astonishingly short time he had adapted himself to Mr. Black's scheme of routine. The records were kept impeccably. Mr. Black had never believed possible such a neat, quick and accurate tucking away of the daily clutterings of a complicated business. All he had to do was to send an office boy with a scribbled memorandum. The information came at once. No more long waits, to result, as often as not, in someone's apology, "Sorry, but those papers must have been misplaced; still looking for 'em."

Scoggins was a young man of thirty with thinning hair and a quiet, energetic way. Thick spectacles made him look professorial. With a passion for perfec-

tion he hung over the files, tinkering at the cabinets with all the thoughtful delicacy of a scientist engaged in a chemical experiment. Mr. Black, inspecting the record room, tried in vain to find something to criticize. Such a system! One could only stand back and admire. Co-ordination—that was it—an ideal co-ordination of the human faculties with the orderly tabulations devised by them.

His mind relieved of its old worry over the records, Mr. Black turned to the other departments. He found them functioning quite well, yet not with the new-found faultlessness of the record room. He made a few changes in the staff, but not many, and, as always, gazed with microscopic eyes at the mechanical aspects of the work. After a brief period of searching study, during which he went about like a white-gloved military inspector looking for dust, he was forced to admit reluctantly that he could think of no improvements. This view was shared by Dodwell's efficiency expert, who went back to New York with such fulsome praise that the president cited Mr. Black *pour le mérite* in the company's general orders.

Mr. Black's régime attained such local fame that he lectured on "Efficiency in Office Management" before the Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce, the One Hundred Per Cent Club and the Men's Brotherhood of the First M. E. Church. He wrote articles for magazines of national circulation. Presidents of banks sought his advice, and received it.

And thus his branch of Dodwell, Inc., went on displaying in judgment the frailties, the hit-or-miss guesses, of all other firms, but observing forms with the reverent zeal of a fanatic.

V

VAGUELY irritating moods pursued Mr. Black. He was restless, discontented. He didn't know why. He would sit at his desk staring at nothing, his attention without a goal. One trouble was his work didn't claim as much effort

as formerly. And his life was encompassed by the office. Golf, his club, his family—the things that his friends doted on—interested him but mildly.

The office functioned so smoothly that he could have left it alone for days—which of course was unthinkable. Questions of policy were of little moment; one referred them to New York. As for the all-important routine, it was so correct that there was nothing to do about it except to marvel at it. But now that he had realized the aim of years, lived to see what must be close to one hundred per cent efficiency, he found the consummation strangely hollow. Something was lacking somewhere. Not in the office—in himself.

He no longer made his minute examinations of the flywheels, belts and ball-bearings of the bureaucratic machinery. The contrivance had become a perpetual motor of neatness and dexterity. Well, wasn't it what he desired above all things? Certainly? Then why was he unhappy? He supposed it was merely the perversity of human beings, the irrepressibility of the eternal evil.

He became sensitive about efficiency. He presumed that he could find a few tiny errors, but he actually was afraid to look. The office had attained a reputation. The thing called pride had taken possession of the Dodwell force. If a letter was not spaced properly, the stenographer in question copied it over. No one had to tell her. If a filing clerk in attaching a flimsy to a cardboard used too much paste and made a blurred spot, he duplicated the flimsy rather than risk having someone notice the smudge. The employes knew efficiency when they saw it. Only those subscribing to the doctrine had been retained; the indifferent persons, who had too many other interests, had gone long ago. Mr. Black was afraid that in snooping about and finding so little wrong he would make himself ridiculous. So he sat in his office and brooded—over nothing at all.

He had used Lindaman as a symbol. To Lindaman he had expressed all the platitudinous reiterations of Loyalty, Energy and Usefulness that once had

been thrust upon him by a superintendent whom Mr. Black had hated and had determined to replace. Now there was no one to talk to in that way. Even if other employes merited rebuke, one couldn't speak to them as one spoke to Lindaman. It was hard to say why, but one couldn't.

The speeches before civic clubs had served very well for a while, but Mr. Black had exhausted the possibility of delivering further the one address of which he was capable. He had written the last salable article for the last of the magazines dealing in clean, uplifting stories on how to climb from office boy to chairman of the board of directors in forty-five years. Everybody in town had heard everything he had to say about efficiency, and if in private conversation he started on the subject, men were apt to look at their watches and remember appointments. Thus he lapsed into an unwilling silence.

Once, when Mr. Black's wife, acting as generalissimo of housecleaning operations, cached away his best shirts in an unlikely place, Mr. Black paused before her with arms folded indignantly.

"That," he informed her, "is not displaying a proper co-operation between partners in a household project. It would seem—"

But Mrs. Black, who was without illusions about her husband, interrupted him rudely. "You can spring that line at the office, but not here. If you don't consider your home efficient enough, suppose you find one that is."

Mr. Black, with an injured air, subsided.

VI

He thought often of Lindaman. After all, he had treated the poor little devil shamefully. Lindaman's years of faithful service had come to nothing. Thrust out, discarded, shoved aside—by the ill temper of a superintendent. Mr. Black, seated at his desk with nothing else to do, glowed with the pleasure of self-condemnation. He was broadminded, he told himself. The many months of

wrangling with Lindaman had not embittered him against this hard-working if blundering servitor. For some reason the office had not seemed the same since Lindaman left. This was aside from the change that might have been expected to result from the general shake-up, from the more complete application of the ideal of administrative perfection. It was as if some old, familiar piece of furniture, liked because one was used to it, was missing.

Lindaman was careless, yet he had redeeming qualities. Scoggins was a mechanism geared to a maximum of speed and endurance. He was so sure of himself—and he had reason to be—that he would not submit to an executive's suggestions. He usually proved beyond question that the executive didn't know what he was talking about. Lindaman, on the other hand, was ready to listen with a proper respect to those wiser and more experienced than he. Of course one wanted help from one's inferiors, and yet—

It would never do to let Scoggins go. He was too valuable. There was a better way. He could be promoted. The city credit reporter was about to go into the New York office. Scoggins would make a fine credit reporter.

Mr. Black dug an address out of a card index, then seized his hat and cane. On the way out he paused thoughtfully. Perhaps he couldn't get Lindaman to come back. Reflection reassured him. Lindaman was used to obeying him; the habit of years was not easily broken.

On the street Mr. Black stopped with another apprehension. He must not let the office know that he had wavered from the iron rule of efficiency. Well, he could have it whispered about that he had—consented to take Lindaman back, to give him another trial. It could be said that—that— Ah, he had it! It could be said that Lindaman had studied and improved himself.

VII

MR. BLACK looked up from his morning's mail.

"Well?"

Lindaman, wearing his greasy old work coat and looking more than ever like a middle-aged schoolboy, leaned over the executive desk nervously.

"You know that—that annual report of the Novelty Manufacturing Company which you told me to file?"

"I recall it distinctly," said Mr. Black.

"I—can't find it," quavered the little clerk. "But I'm still looking for it," he added hopelessly.

"Of course!" Mr. Black folded his long arms, elevated his chest, sat up straight in his swivel chair. "That, Lindaman, is one of those things which in business are inexcusable."

"It couldn't be in here?" hazarded Lindaman, his pessimistic eyes wandering about the floor, the walls and the ceiling, as if there was a possibility the report might appear suspended at some odd angle.

"It couldn't." The superintendent cleared his throat. "I personally took it out and gave it to you. I remember the things that I do, Lindaman. I learned to long ago, when I first entered the business world. I realized that it was one of the cornerstones of success.

"You never seem to have realized the value of fixing in your mind the details of your work as you go along. Suppose all business was run your way. What would become of us? Everything would be in disorder. Do you suppose such organizations as the United States Steel Corporation ever could have been built up without a proper co-ordination between the correlated departments? I, as the executive department, hand you, as the record department, a certain paper. You lose it—at least you misplace it. Is that co-operation?"

"I see," commented Lindaman.

"Now continue to look for it, and report to me later the result, if any, of your search."

"I see."

Lindaman, his narrow shoulders drooping disconsolately, went back to the record room.

Mr. Black returned to his mail with a sigh of satisfaction.

Love and Marriage

By John Torcross

I AM less interested in marriage than in love, just as I am less interested in love than in women. Thus do I fail to draw the conclusion that because one loves a woman one should marry her. The two issues appear to me wholly separate and diverse. The perfect married woman is the good cook, the efficient nurse, the executive of the household, the tender mother. The perfect woman of love is the charmer, the sympathetic companion, the comedienne. But the perfect woman of love possesses none of those qualifications that make for the perfect wife. Hence marriages based on love so often terminate in wholesale disaster. We attempt to produce material effects through emotional means.

When a man marries he dons a sable garb and pulls a long face. Both cling to him till he realizes that the woman he has married is but a human being, after all. With that realization he will, often enough, revert to flippancy, to

lightheartedness, to revelry, but it is usually too late. The deadly germ of matrimony is not so easily shaken off. He is Hamlet pretending to be Puck.

Love is designed for youth; marriage for old age. In the springtime of our lives we are intoxicated with the beauty of romance; with the approach of winter we turn sobered minds to the problem of submitting to it least painfully. Love is essentially a thing of spontaneity, striking with lightning rapidity. Marriage is a creature of calculation, crushing with irrepressible force. We say that it is wrong to marry without loving, yet we have made it a far greater crime to love without marrying. As an abstract proposition love is condemned and unless marriage be its aim it is regarded as something unwholesome, something indecent.

Nowadays if one falls in love one must pay heavily for it, and matrimony is the current price.



WHEN a woman can't express her thoughts it means she hasn't adjectives enough. When a man can't, it means he hasn't swear words enough.



A WOMAN'S calibre is determined by noting whether her husband is the result of her industry or her discrimination.



Répétition Générale

By H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan

§ 1

PACIFISTS.—There are pacifists in pleasure as well as pacifists in war. The latter are called cowards. The former are called leading moral citizens.

§ 2

Myth and Fact.—Around every bachelor of more than thirty-five, legends tend to congregate, chiefly about the causes of his celibacy. If it is not whispered that he is damaged goods, and hence debarred from marriage by a lofty concept of Service to the unborn, it is told under the breath that he was insanely in love at the age of twenty-six with a beautiful creature who jilted him for an insurance underwriter and so broke his heart beyond repair. Such tales are nearly always moonshine. The reason why the average bachelor of thirty-five remains a bachelor is really very simple. It is, in brief, that no ordinarily attractive and intelligent woman has ever made a serious and undivided effort to marry him.

§ 3

Art and Health.—Art is the child of ill health. In the whole history of art, there is negligible record of a completely sound and healthy man having produced a notable piece of work. Michelangelo, during the six years that he was working on "The Last Judgment," was a sufferer from violent intestinal disorders. Schumann was a victim of syphilis when he composed

his finest songs. Rubens' "Fall of the Damned" was conceived and executed under the tortures of neuralgia. Mark Twain's and Robert Louis Stevenson's delicate health is a matter of record. Lord Byron was born with a malformation of both feet. Stephen Crane suffered from acute alcoholism. Beethoven's indiscretions brought with them a disease that remained uncured to the day of his death. Shakespeare, when he wrote "Hamlet" in 1600, had the gout. Heine was a victim of tuberculosis, and François Villon of the pediculus vestimenti. Goethe completed the second part of "Faust" in the rapidly failing months that ended with his death. Molière, though not a consumptive, had weak lungs that brought on frequent severe coughing spells. Strindberg was periodically insane, and Ibsen had diabetes. Swinburne's ailment everyone is familiar with. Rousseau's life was made miserable by delusions of persecution, brought to an end only by apoplexy. Mozart during the last half of his life was in feeble health that eventually affected his mind. Chopin had tuberculosis, and had to be nursed almost continuously in his later years. Swift's brain was diseased, and "he was alternately in a state of torture and apathetic torpor." Cervantes, in the campaign against the Turks, was, in 1571, badly wounded in the battle of Lepanto, losing the use of his left hand and arm for life; his great work was all done in the subsequent years. Bach's eyes were so bad that he eventually went blind, his sight being restored only ten days before his death. Händel had a stroke of paralysis in one of his hands,

and suffered frequent nervous collapses. Freiherr von Weber had consumption, and James Huneker had kidney trouble. Gluck had an excessively high blood pressure: it was apoplexy that finished him. Paganini had phthisis of the larynx and a constitution so delicate, from dissipation and from his custom of practising ten hours a day, that it could stand very little strain. Tschai-kowski's serious illness up to the time that he was twenty-two years old left him in a very weak condition; he needed frequent long rest periods in which to gain enough strength to go on with his work. Samuel Johnson lost the use of one of his eyes from scrofula, and Verlaine spent month after month in hospitals. Sir Joshua Reynolds was deaf. Alfred de Musset, through irregular and dissolute living, was a weakling, and was able to work only three hours a day. De Quincey was an opium fiend, and got so bad that he had to take three hundred and forty grains a day. Homer, in his late years, was blind. So was John Milton, after 1652; he wrote "Paradise Lost" between 1658 and 1665; all his fine work was done after his eyesight was gone. Robert Greene, the English novelist, dramatist and poet, suffered for years from violent indigestion: he died after eating pickled herring. William Cowper in early life showed symptoms of melancholia: his attacks of suicidal mania led to his frequent temporary confinement in private asylums. Saint-Saëns had to give up his residence in Paris because of certain pathological idiosyncrasies. Lafcadio Hearn was a chronic invalid; he had the constitution of an ailing woman. Victorien Sardou would never have written the plays that made him famous had his health not been carefully looked after by a charitable neighbor, Mademoiselle de Brécourt. Even Anthony Trollope had gallstones. . . .

§ 4

The Popinjay.—The vanity of man is almost illimitable. In every act of

his life, however trivial, and particularly in every act which pertains to his profession, he takes all the pride of a baby learning to walk. It may seem incredible but it is nevertheless a fact that I myself get great delight out of writing such banal paragraphs as this one. The physical business of writing is extremely unpleasant to me, as it is to most other human beings, but the psychic satisfaction of discharging bad ideas in worse English is enough to make me forget it entirely. I am almost as happy, writing, as a judge is on his bench, listening idiotically to the obscene wrangles of two scoundrelly attorneys, or a bishop in his pulpit, proving nonsensically that God never sleeps, or a structural iron-worker high in air, giving a free show to a gang of idle office-boys, panhandlers, policemen and sandwich-men.

§ 5

The Great War Service of Blasco Ibáñez.—I quote from *Les Annales*, of Paris, the following, printed with a perfectly straight face:

Who can ever forget the ardor with which in 1914 he espoused the cause of the Allies? He visited the battle lines. He lived in Paris in the difficult days. There he composed "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" and "Mare Nostrum." There he gathered the material for the nine volumes of his "History of the War." He worked sixteen hours a day. One night, toward 3 o'clock in the morning, as the pen was slipping from his exhausted fingers, he pulled himself together, saying: "It is for France; it is for the *patrie* of Victor Hugo!" and he worked till dawn.

§ 6

Canto XXVII.—A large part of the current belief in democracy is simply the product of the fact that democracy is official. The great majority of men believe in anything that is official, and cease to believe in it the moment it is no longer official. The German booboisie was overwhelmingly monarchist until the Kaiser began his vacation; now it is overwhelmingly republican. In exactly the same way the American

booboisie will cease to be democratic on the day following the day that the Man on Horseback gallops up the White House steps.

§ 7

A Concealed Danger.—That rule of medical ethics which forbids a physician to prescribe for his own wife, especially in serious illness, is founded upon a sound instinct. If he were allowed to dose her *ad libitum*, as he doses other patients, the temptation to poison her would often be irresistible. But if a physician may not prescribe for his wife, then why should his wife be permitted to cook for him? Certainly her temptation, at times, must be very severe—and likewise the temptation of every other wife. Why should we assume that wives always resist it? Why take it for granted that the relative high death-rate among husbands, so brilliantly visible in the vital statistics, is due solely to their drunkenness and debauchery?

§ 8

No. 2,764.—A woman has small use for an excessively witty man. The man who is "the life of the party," the man whose indefatigable conversation and humor keep the ball of gayety rolling, the man who with assiduous quip and pleasantries maintains the jocund spirit of the festive evening—that man is the one who nine times in ten goes home without a girl. Women may not admire boneheads, but their love is in the main for more or less taciturn men.

§ 9

The Modern Marco Polo.—What a civilized foreigner chiefly notices in the United States is the lack of things that are necessities of life at home—for example, a secure aristocracy, politeness in inferiors, urbane society. Is it any wonder that he is uncomfortable? How would you like to go to a land in which there was not a single bath-tub?

§ 10

Human Progress.—The United States is a country that was formerly run by brewers and saloon-keepers and is now run by Methodist preachers.

§ 11

Definition.—I exhume the following characterization of an American university president from my notes: "that singular combination of despot, pope, hypocrite, liar and knave." It is not mine; it comes from a university professor of thirty years' practice. Dad knows!

§ 12

Colonies.—The influence of the English colonies upon England has been profound and ever-present since the Seventeenth Century—and not only in politics and foreign policy, but in literature, philosophy and even social usage. The Russian colonies in Central Asia saved Russia from Europeanization. The Spanish colonies completely transformed the character of the Spaniard. The French colonies in Africa, in a few more generations, will make the French a race of mulattoes. But what has been the influence of the American colonies upon the everyday life and thought of the American people? Absolutely *nil*.

§ 13

Authors.—There are two groups of authors: first, those who, when they have finished writing a book, consider it excellent, and second, those who, when they have finished writing a book, consider it rotten. All first-rate authors belong to the second group.

§ 14

Aristocracy.—In Europe, aristocracy is founded upon land. In the United States, it is founded upon real estate.

§ 15

The First Step.—To abolish war,

first abolish all the brass bands and colored bunting.

§ 16

The Aggressor.—The notion that man is the aggressor in love is frequently supported by old-fashioned psychologists by pointing to the example of the lower animals. The lion, it appears, stalks the lioness; the rooster pursues the reluctant hen. Granted. But all this merely proves, giving the analogy all the value asked for it, that man is the aggressor as *lover*, i.e., as seducer. Is he also the aggressor as *husband*? To ask the question is to answer it. Well, it is precisely his rôle of husband that differentiates man from lion and rooster. And once he is thus differentiated, all his previous likeness disappears. In civilized societies, to sum up, there is a double stalking—for mistresses and for husbands. The fact that the majority of men, soon or late, are married is a capital indication of the relative enthusiasm and pertinacity with which the two varieties of aggression are conducted.

§ 17

Award.—An heroic bronze bust of Thomas Wildey, founder of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, to the venerable brother, Dr. William Lyon Phelps, *de l'Institut Américain*, Lampson professor of the English language and literature in Yale University, for the following sweet schnitzel of Eskimo pie in the *Ladies' Home Journal* for June, page 25:

Elisha is one of the grandest figures in Hebrew history. . . . During his life he saved many, and his vitality was so astounding that *even after his death and burial his dry bones had more force than radium.*

§ 18

"Efficiency."—I have small use for Efficiency in business. I admire it, however, in pleasure.

§ 19

The Breaking Point.—A man will

tolerate any criticism of himself from a woman, and pay small attention to it. What he will not stand is criticism of his friends. More couples have split upon this point than any other.

§ 20

The Success of Democracy.—The latest available statistics show that the United States employs, in proportion to the number of its citizens, more policemen than any other country in the civilized world.

§ 21

Washington, D. C.—The fourth secretary of the Paraguayan legation. . . . The chief clerk to the House committee on industrial arts and expositions. . . . The secretary to the secretary to the Secretary of Labor. . . . The brother to the former Congressman from the third Idaho district. . . . The messenger to the chief of the Senate folding room. . . . The doorkeeper outside the committee-room of the House committee on the disposition of useless executive papers. . . . The chief correspondent of the Toombsboro, Ga., *Banner* in the Senate press-gallery. . . . The stenographer to the assistant chief entomologist of the Bureau of Animal Industry. . . . The third assistant chief computer in the office of the Naval Almanac. . . . The assistant Attorney-General in charge of the investigation of postal frauds in the South Central States. . . . The former wife of the former secretary to the former member of the Interstate Commerce Commission. . . . The brother to the wife of the *chargé d'affaires* of Czecho-Slovakia. . . . The bootlegger to the ranking Democratic member of the committee on the election of President, Vice-President and representatives in Congress. . . . The acting assistant doorkeeper of the House visitors' gallery. . . . The junior Senator from Delaware. . . . The assistant to the secretary to the chief clerk of the Division of Audits and Disbursements, Bureau

of Stationery and Supplies, Postoffice Department. . . The press-agent to the chaplain of the House. . . The commercial attaché to the American legation at Quito. . . The chauffeur to the fourth assistant Postmaster-General. . . The acting substitute elevator-man in the Washington monument. . . The brother to the wife of the brother-in-law of the Vice-President. . . The aunt to the sister of the wife of the secretary to the chief of the Russian Bureau in the State Department. . . The neighbor of the cousin of the stepfather of the sister-in-law of the President's pastor. . . The old classmate of the general commanding the homeopathic section of the Army Medical Corps. . . The superintendent of charwomen in Temporary Storehouse B7, Bureau of Navy Yards and Docks, Navy Department. . . The assistant to the assistant chief gardener, Capitol grounds. . . The confidential clerk to the chief clerk to

the acting chief examiner of the Patent Office. . . The valet to the Chief Justice. . .

§ 22

Revised Proverb.—Procrastination is the thief of love.

§ 23

No. 2,762.—It is a sign of man's incontrovertible idiocy that he will like any woman who shows signs of liking him.

§ 24

In Memoriam.—The Pragmatic Sanction, the Salic Law, the Donation of Constantine, the Code of Hammurabi, the Holy Alliance, the Fourteen Points, the Constitution of the United States—

Good friend, for Jesus' sake forebear
To dig the dust enclosed here!



The Frustrate Song

By George O'Neil

NOW Summer comes and all its ecstasy
Stares from the dew-star in the grass,
Sun over rain and coronals of leaf;
Warm robins and the redbird pass.

Old pageantry anew, old pantomime,
Come for their thousandth year's applause . . .
What fervor, what imagining is this!
Challenging men to pray and pause.

But for a year I have desired too much,
Kindled and burned and frosted through . . .
And nothing in this stir can quicken one
Whose flame was impotent to you.



The Helpmeet

By Walter B. Lister

I

HERE are the documents. The first is a clipping from *Punch and Personality*, January 22, 1921:

Listen, fellows. This is a MESSAGE for MEN.

It's the story of William S. Baxter, the garbage-can king. You think of him every time your wife asks you to step outside the kitchen with the table scraps.

You inevitably associate Baxter with garbage. And his career has a LESSON in it that should be taken to heart by every man who wants to win out in business against tremendous odds.

William S. Baxter's father, a garage helper, died when William was six years old. He left him two things. They were:

1. His blessing.
2. A family Bible.

"That Bible," says William S. Baxter, "has been my inspiration and guide in many a time of stress and storm."

What do you think William S. Baxter was doing when he was seven? Imagine! *He was a newsboy!* And what is still more astounding, he sold newspapers.

Night after night, while other little boys helped their mothers with the dishes or listened to their fathers read *Paradise Lost*, William S. Baxter was out in the cold, snowy darkness, accosting passersby and urging them to purchase newspapers.

His profit on each newspaper, he says, was a half cent. But that's not the point. His immediate financial

return may have been small, but in those weary days Baxter was learning the most valuable thing in the world—the SECRET of SALESMANSHIP.

"Young man," says William S. Baxter, "if you would succeed in any line of endeavor, you must learn salesmanship. You must learn not only to sell the article you may be pushing—you must also sell yourself.

"For example, I soon devised a few simple rules. I was always courteous, even in the face of the sharpest rebuffs. I made sure that my grammar was correct. I took pains to see in every man, woman or child a potential customer.

"I would approach a man and say firmly, 'Sir, are you interested in a murder? I have a brutal one today on the first page of the *Evening Stuff*. The price is two cents.'

"If he bought, I knew that my method was right. If he pushed me into the gutter, I surmised that he did not care to invest at that time."

Thus did William S. Baxter fight his battles while only a boy. His blue eyes are keen and gray now, but they twinkle as he tells about his newspaper career. It lasted until he was eleven, when he started in as a clerk in a hardware store. There, as you may imagine, the education which he had picked up from reading the newspapers was of great value.

William S. Baxter was a good hardware clerk. He says so himself. But the hours were too short, he felt, for him ever to make a great success, and he finally severed his connection with the firm and began life over again driving an ice wagon.

"No man," says William S. Baxter,

"can hope to succeed unless he is willing to work longer than from 7 a. m. until 8 p. m., with fifteen minutes off for lunch."

It was while he was carrying ice into kitchens that Baxter had his great inspiration. He noticed that almost every housewife had a garbage can. The garbage cans had been there before. But it took Baxter to glimpse their message.

"Young man," says William S. Baxter, "if you would succeed, decide to make something for which there is a universal demand. By this I mean something that everyone will want."

Before Baxter entered the field, the trouble with garbage cans had been that the covers stuck. Women were tired of wrestling with balky covers.

Baxter solved the problem. He placed round the top of each can a layer of pure grease.

That's just another hint of Baxter's success methods. He *solved his problem!*

"I consider," says William S. Baxter, "that the successful man of today, to be successful, must solve his problems."

With all this insight into William S. Baxter's gripping personality, it is scarcely to be wondered that, a short time ago, he rose almost overnight to the presidency of the Amalgamated Kitchen Can Corporation. . . .

II

WHAT "Onion Eye" Schnitzler, under the signature of Dorothy Dotwell, wrote in the *Evening Stuff*, February 3, 1921:

I paused shyly as I entered the home of William S. Baxter. For I was looking into the chilled-steel eyes of the man whose recent sensational rise to wealth has caused him to be dubbed the Garbage Can King.

He smiled at my embarrassment.

"Come," he said gently. "I want you to meet my boss."

And in another moment I was shaking hands with Mrs. Baxter, who, her

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husband says, made him what he is today.

The monarchs of business who know William S. Baxter say that he is a keen executive, driving himself and his assistants relentlessly, a man who thinks constantly in terms of millions, of thousands of employes, a man who will spare nothing to gain efficiency.

But I didn't see that side of him. I saw only a simple, kindly man of fifty, who beamed upon his wife and took her hand in his.

"I'm glad I've made good, Sadie," he told her. "It was all because of you."

Mrs. Baxter wouldn't say much. "I'm not a great hand for talking," she said. "I let Will speak for me. I'm just kind of a homebody."

"Now, now, Sadie," said the Garbage Can King. "We've been in double harness too long for you to make light of yourself like that."

And then Baxter went on to tell how they had been married more than twenty years ago, how they had scrimped and saved and struggled, and how wealth had finally come to them.

"Remember that first little rag rug we were able to buy, Sadie?" he reminded his "boss" with a laugh. "It seemed pretty much like heaven when we finally saved up the three-eighty-five it cost, didn't it?"

Baxter started in life as a newsboy for *The Stuff*. He met his wife just after he had opened a small factory on Maple Street, turning out garbage cans. He worked hard for years and years, but, he says, "just made a living."

Five months ago he made a discovery which experts say has revolutionized the garbage can industry. Briefly, it is that by cutting the size of the cans in half, each housewife will be obliged to buy two instead of one.

"I'm mighty glad, too, for Sadie's sake," Baxter said. "Because everything that I have done, I owe to my wife. If it hadn't been for her, I'd still have been plugging away at the little factory, instead of being president of this big new corporation."

And Mrs. Baxter? Well, she sat in

her armchair and just smiled until the springs creaked. And, soon, Baxter went over to her and smoothed her hair, that was half blonde and half dark, and—well, I can't quite say, for at that moment I was leaving—

But I think he kissed her!

III

FROM William S. Baxter to Luke Jenkins, Springboro, Ohio, March 15, 1921:

Dear Luke: I reckon I'll be down to see you and the folks in a week or so. Somehow I'd kind of like to do some fishing again on Raccoon Creek. I'll buy the tackle, for I suppose you know I've made a little money now.

Yes, Luke, I think I'll clear about three millions out of the new company. I tell you, Luke, it's a big satisfaction, too. I been wanting money.

You remember my wife, Sadie, don't you, Luke? Well, I never thought much of her since she got fat and I don't think you did either the last time you was to visit us. I don't mind her dyeing her hair so much, except she kind of keeps it half and half. I think

maybe we could of got along if she'd been satisfied to be either blonde or brunette. She snored, too, Luke.

Well, I been trying hard to get out from under for a long time. I worked mighty hard. It took me pretty near twenty years, and now I think perhaps I got more'n I'll need. You can't tell with Sadie, though, Luke.

Luke, I waited until six months after the new company had been formed. And then when I was right certain it was going to go just as big as it looked, I went home to Sadie, and I took a hair-brush and I gave her just as good a licking as her Ma ever did.

And, Luke, I said, "Now look here, Sadie, I been waiting and working and making money for pretty near twenty years for this. Now you get to hell out of here and sue me for divorce and be damned. I got all the money I want, and I guess for once in my life I can afford to pay alimony."

Well, Luke, she got. And her lawyer gave me the papers today. So I guess it's all settled. I'll probably be down next week, Luke. Hope the fish are biting.

Yours sincerely,

Willie.



THERE are two ways of gaining disciples—one by promising a hot time hereafter and one by promising a hot time here.



LOVE should be necromancy, but some of it is nothing but parlor magic.



Wanderers

By Ruth Suckow

I

THE trustees were to meet at the parsonage tonight. The Congregational minister, Reverend Noble, was uneasy, but he was trying not to let his wife see it. After supper, he had gone out to the garden back of the house, where he had just put in the early vegetables, and was wandering about, breaking off some of the brown last year's stalks from the phlox and running his hand meditatively over the bark of the plum tree.

His wife followed him out and stood on the back step, shivering in the April air.

"I don't know that we need to have put in all this seed," she said.

He did not answer.

"That's always the way. We plant things and someone else gets the benefit."

"Oh now, mamma," he protested vaguely.

She gave a small sound, half a sniff, half a sigh. "You better come in and put on your other coat. They'll be here pretty soon."

She went back into the house but he lingered for a few minutes out by the plum tree, touching and tapping the rough, cracked black bark. He liked it out here—liked the small black plowed-up patch of garden soil, the back view of the old-fashioned white house that had no second story over the kitchen, the bare currant bushes and the heap of stones out along the valley, the plum tree and the overgrown lilac bush. The clear pale evening sky, and the coolness. Bird twitterings. . . . It gave him the sense of home.

He went into the downstairs bedroom where his wife was standing before the mirror of the old-fashioned two-part dresser recoiling her little knot of hair.

They were elderly people. The minister was a spare, gray-haired man with mildly disappointed eyes, dressed with respectable ministerial shabbiness in a dark coat and trousers that did not match. His wife looked older. Her hair was white. Her face had an anxious, concerned, self-effacing look that had come from the uneasy knowledge that people were criticizing her. Her shoulders were bent, and she had a little dumpy figure. She was wearing a blue skirt and a blue silk waist with an edge of tatting around the collar.

Her face was drawn a little as if she were crying. The minister put his arm around her and said with false cheeriness: "Now, mamma, don't worry about this meeting. I don't think they'll mention anything except the redecorating."

"I'm afraid of John Shattuck," she articulated faintly.

"Oh, never mind about John Shattuck. He won't be here."

"No, but. . . ."

"And anyway, what can John Shattuck say? We've done nothing."

"No, but that won't matter if he wants to get us out. They can always find something."

"What can he find, I'd like to know?"

"Well . . . he'll find something."

"Oh, well, they're not trying to get us out now. Don't worry about things until you come to them," he said stoutly. "You're tired out over all that cleaning and that makes you see the dark side of things."

She looked anxiously about.

"I wish I'd got the curtains washed," she murmured.

"Those men will never notice the curtains."

She hitched herself away from his arm and went into the sitting-room, where she took up her tatting and worked with nervous energy.

Mr. Noble went into the closet for his coat, and stood there holding it, in the little dark, stuffy place among his wife's dresses.

He was worried about this thing himself. Something not quite open in the greetings of some of his members, vague hints let fall now and then, had warned him that things were "brewing." There was nothing definite. The only thing he really feared was that John Shattuck would come to the meeting tonight and make trouble. He wished that "Mamma" need not have been here. She took things so to heart. But then, John Shattuck wouldn't come. And if he did, what could he find to say? He was firm in the conviction that he had done his best, so far as he knew how. Even if he had made enemies of the Woods and Shattucks.

His pastorate here had seemed to start so well. Grandview was a pretty, quiet little town of retired farmers up in the wooded limestone region of northeastern Iowa, a pleasant place in which to end their journeyings. The church had seemed to be running smoothly. It was the strongest in town. But there were things under the surface. He might have taken warning by the fact that the last man had had to leave.

Even yet it was hard to figure out all the ins and outs of the trouble, which at first had been only "things going on," then "an element," then "a faction," and now was trembling on the verge of "a split." It was hard to say who was really at the bottom of it, the Shattucks or the "Woodses" or Mrs. Frary.

Mrs. Frary was generally blamed. She was a handsome, lively, capable woman, but a little too "gay" for Grandview. When the Nobles came, she was

leading the singing in the Sunday School and conducting an orchestra, composed of three violins, a flute, the piano, and fearful toots from Edgar Perrinjacket on the cornet. Mrs. Frary took with the young people. Mr. Noble had been delighted at these signs of life in the Sunday School. He and Mrs. Noble had liked Mrs. Frary at once—had praised her singing, the most fatal move they could have made, and had extolled her work in the Sunday School.

This had first alienated the Shattucks, and the Shattucks were the banker's family, the "main ones" in the church. It was some time before they had realized that there was anything wrong. They were gentle, kindly, unsuspecting people, who believed in home and foreign missions, and had a trusting yet puzzled faith in the Lord. They did not look for trouble. There had been hints, but everyone had been too cautious to come right out, as they said, and tell them. But finally, by troubled applications to George Wolverton and Mrs. Cady and other approachable souls, Mr. Noble had begun to be able to figure the thing out.

It seemed that when Mrs. Frary had first come to Grandview, she had been asked to sing in the Congregational choir. There had been rejoicing over thus getting ahead of the Methodists. This had offended Margaret Woods, who was the mainstay of the choir and had a half-trained voice given to whooping on the high notes that she had no chance to use anywhere else.

But Mrs. Frary had been neither wise nor meek enough to sit back and let Margaret sing. Mrs. Frary was an active soul. She loved to be doing. She had sung joyfully whenever asked; and at first, while she was a novelty, this had been at all the town functions. Even then it was thought that she was "a little gay." But she was pretty, and had a voice, and she had her following.

Then it was rumored that Homer Shattuck, the banker's son, the one real eligible in Grandview and prized accordingly, was paying too much attention to Mrs. Frary. It was observed

that he always tried to be her partner at card parties of the younger set, and that she was often passing the bank at closing time. He had called her by her first name, and she a married woman. People had seen them walking out toward Lime Creek together. She was said to be creating trouble and leading Homer on.

Homer had been for four or five years halfway engaged to Margaret Woods, who was older than he; and his family was reported eager for the match, as it would unite the Woods and Shattuck interests in the bank and bring in the big Woods relationship. This had set Mrs. Shattuck and Miss Verna Shattuck, the social leaders of Grandview, bitterly against Mrs. Frary—who besides had clothes and an air not justified by her income. Then it was said that Nelson Fales, the real estate man, was too interested in Mrs. Frary. Nelson was known to be dissipated and to have "other women" in other towns. All the worse for Mrs. Frary. There were stories about her. She was said to be a bad influence for the young people. People began to join virtuously with the Woodses and the Shattucks to get her out of the church.

Into this tangle the poor Nobles had stepped, and by their innocent praise of Mrs. Frary had doomed themselves from the start. But they were such well-meaning, gentle people, anxious and conscientious in what they trustingly believed to be the "work of the Kingdom," that it was some time before anything could be actually urged against them. When the affair had come to a crisis, Mrs. Frary had appealed to them, to the fluttering consternation of Mrs. Noble, not to let her be forced out of the church and made a social outcast in Grandview. By this time they had learned that she was "gay." But there was "something nice about her," as Mrs. Noble said. And she had worked hard for the Sunday School.

Mr. Noble had believed that she was unjustly treated. He had gone about all day through the rain and slush, in

his overshoes and his shabby bad weather coat, to see his members, and to beg that Mrs. Frary be allowed to stay at least until something had been proved against her. He had urged that it would blow over. That she would see her mistakes. He had even gone, in his innocence, to the Woods and the Shattucks. Then Mrs. Noble had given him a hot foot bath and put him to bed.

From this he could dimly trace how the trouble had grown. Mrs. Frary had had to leave. But he had always been particularly careful to be courteous to her on the street and to show that he respected her; had called upon her when she was ill as if she had still been one of his members; and when she had invited them to Thanksgiving dinner, as two elderly people whose children were far away and who would have had to spend the day alone, they had talked it over and gone, in spite of Mrs. Noble's timid misgivings. All their members had big "relationships" and had not thought of them.

Then Mr. Noble had further offended John Shattuck by making a speech in favor of a new school building, when John Shattuck, President of the School Board, had been opposed because of taxes. It was said that one day he had failed to speak to Mrs. Woods on the street. He had not called on the Metzlar boy when he had jaundice and had called on someone else. "The element" was working. The Woodses had declared that he was not preaching the gospel. They had "gone over to the Methodists." Others were threatening to follow. John Shattuck had suddenly stopped coming to church, although he had not yet withdrawn his subscription. The Annual Meeting had come. Homer Shattuck, who had not been to church since the day when he had stopped taking a girl home from the Christian Endeavor, but who was now very anxious to prove that he had never been interested in Mrs. Frary, had spoken. He had said that the church was falling behind on its finances and that the young people were

dropping out. "The faction" was growing, some joining it because others did, a few because it was a good way of getting in with the Shattucks.

There was an opposing element, of course. But it would never be so strong *for* as the other *against*. Besides, Mr. Noble's best friends were not the influential ones. They were the people whom the others never thought of—Grandma Phillips who lived up above Miss Hunt's Millinery Store, the new members in the country, old Schwartz, the cabinet maker, who was a reader; Miss McClintock, the first grade teacher, who was alone in the world.

He did not see how he could have done otherwise. For himself he could stand it. It was what every minister had to go through at some time in his career. It was one of the sad and disappointing drawbacks to the "work of the Kingdom." There were always "Some" in every church. In every church there came a time when it was "a good thing to get away" or "wise to make a change." Forty years of the ministry had taken the pride out of him. But it was for her—for "mamma." For her sake he must hang on.

He had promised her that this should be their last church. "Mamma" couldn't stand the moving any more, the tearing up and getting settled again. They would stay here until they had finished scraping together enough to keep them when he could no longer preach. He could see how hard she had worked to make a home of it. They had revarnished the floors themselves, as they always did, and cut over the curtains to fit the different windows, had one of their old carpets made over into a rug. She had embroidered a scarf for the dresser, made tatting to edge the parlor curtains, covered with flowered cretonne the box in which he kept his Sunday shirts, passepartouted the colored reproductions of masterpieces from the *Ladies' Home Journal* to hang on the walls. She had worked almost as hard as over their first home, believing that this was to be their last.

And now they had found that she must have an operation. She must have a home. They must have somewhere she could rest, where Lura their daughter, who was teaching in New Mexico, could come and care for her. At their son Arnold's they could not feel themselves welcome. Mamma would never be able to stand it there. He might not be able to pick up another church right away. The churches were calling for younger men. It was not right that she should suffer for the personal jealousies of people whom she had never injured. He wondered what he could do. Perhaps it would be a good thing to speak to Wolverton, or to Alfred Bliss.

If anything should happen tonight. . . . The trustees, with the exception of John Shattuck, were all good enough men taken separately, but together they might do anything. But then, George Wolverton would be here. Alfred Bliss had always seemed very friendly. Ira Cousins would do as the others did. Nothing would happen tonight. He wished he had said something to one of them, to Alfred Bliss, about mamma.

He put on his coat in the dim-lit room, looking at the calm evening outside, at the bare rosebush that tapped the window. He had taken great care of the rosebush and hoped that it would bear plentifully this June. It would please Lura when she came, she was so fond of flowers and had so little chance for any of her own.

II

HE went into the sitting-room. They were nervous. Mrs. Noble kept knotting her thread and listening for the bell.

Ira Cousins was the first to come. He was a hardware merchant, a thin, dusty, nondescript-looking man who never had much to say. He took the straight-backed chair that stood next to the door and refused to exchange it for another, although Mrs. Noble kept twittering: "I'm afraid you're not finding that very comfortable, Mr. Cousins."

"Nice spring weather we're having," Mr. Noble ventured.

"Yes. Pretty good."

Ira looked ill at ease, as if he had arrived too soon. The burden of a conversation was almost too much for him. They thought anxiously that it was just that, just Ira's way. He kept his eyes on the glass doors of the old-fashioned bookcase which contained the Nobles' library, apart from the theological books in the study—sets of Dickens and George Eliot, books that Arnold and Lura had used in school, Tennyson, Cowper and Jean Ingelow in faded bindings, and a miscellaneous lot purchased from agents whom they had not been able to turn away, young fellows working their way through school, and poor spinsters supporting feeble mothers. Ira industriously studied their titles. When he had finished, he gazed at the photograph of Lura in cap and gown, and at the small framed picture of Mrs. Noble above the bookcase. It had been taken when she was a young woman. She had a small plump face with dimples and crimped hair, and a lace tucker ornamented with coquettish bows of ribbon.

Mrs. Noble said: "Is Vera better since she had her tonsils out?"

Ira slowly brought back his eyes. "Well . . . I don't know. She don't seem to be gaining much."

"You'll have to take her up to Rochester and let them have a look at her," Mr. Noble said.

"Yes. 'Spect it'll come to that."

Mrs. Noble tatted with nervous haste. When the door bell rang she jumped.

"Sit still, mam—Hester," Mr. Noble said hastily. "I'll go."

Alfred Bliss and Mr. Kemmerer came in on a flood of geniality. "Howd'-do, how d'-do, Mrs. Noble? Nice evening. Fine weather. Don't know that I ever saw things looking better. No, no; keep your seat—keep your seat. Well, friend Ira, I see you got ahead of us."

Mrs. Noble's face grew hot and then pale when she saw that John Shattuck was not with them.

"Take this chair, Mr. Bliss," she said solicitously, drawing out the big imitation leather rocker.

"Well, thank you—thank you. I don't know that I should—Brother Kemmerer, you'd better sit here."

"No, no. No, no. I'm very comfortable."

Alfred Bliss wiped his face that had a pale, luminous glow. He was the chief lawyer in Grandview and had once served a term in the State House of Representatives—a small man with short legs and a large head, dressed in a William Jennings Bryan style of black felt hat, negligent collar and tie, and coat open over his wrinkled vest. He had a round, pale, shining face, eyes beaming cordially behind spectacles, a little smattering of flossy gray hair and a little gray mustache sunken in above his round, smiling mouth. He was always very friendly and genial to everyone.

"Well, Mrs. Noble, I see you're hard at work," he said.

"Not real work—just a little fancy work," she apologized.

"Oh, yes, I know how that goes!" he cried with an effect of chivalrous railery that made Mrs. Noble think: "He is a nice man!" "You're just like my wife. I never can get her to rest. Always has to be busy at something."

Mrs. Noble gave him a pale, grateful smile. "How is Mrs. Bliss?" she asked.

He became instantly mournful. "She isn't as well this spring as I'd like to see her, Mrs. Noble. I think I'll have to have Daisy or Arnette stay at home with her next winter. She misses them. She misses the girls, you know."

"Indeed I do know!" Mrs. Noble cried fervently, with a sudden rending pang for Lura.

"These cold winters are hard on everyone," Mr. Kemmerer stated.

"Yes, and she overdoes. She needs the girls," said Alfred Bliss.

"He's good to her," Mrs. Noble thought approvingly.

"I hear that your wife's mother is coming to make her home with you, Mr. Kemmerer."

"We've been trying to persuade her. But I don't know how it will be. She hates to give up her own home."

"Yes. Well, all these old people do," Alfred Bliss said sympathetically. "And you can't blame them."

"No, I don't blame her. No."

Mrs. Noble looked surreptitiously at Mr. Kemmerer. She did not quite know what to make of him. He had always been kind to them in his colorless way—as kind as "she" would let him be, perhaps. He was revered in Grandview as a remarkably intelligent man. He had once been a Superintendent of Schools. But the gradual withering up of his intellectual interests in the pursuit of a business career in Grandview, and the tyranny of a wife who was known as a "manager," had given him a faded, strained, despondent look. Tonight he seemed more dried up and mournful than ever.

But Alfred Bliss was in good spirits. Now that he had come the restraint seemed to be lifted. An atmosphere of amiability spread from him as he sat in the big chair in which he could scarcely keep both feet on the floor—his face giving out a pale glow, and his eyes, as he took off his spectacles, blew on them, and wiped them with a large, crumpled handkerchief.

He asked genially: "Well, is it Brother Wolverton we're waiting for?"

Mrs. Noble's heart gave a throb. She looked at Mr. Noble. Now they need not worry about John Shattuck coming! The something that had been hanging over her all week lifted. She felt relieved and suddenly lighthearted. She gave a little flustered laugh.

"I suppose George is pretty busy these days," Alfred Bliss went on. "He can't let go of the farm, you know."

"No, pretty hard for any of these old farmers to do that."

They heard George Wolverton at the door. They knew his walk, and the way he always scraped his shoes on the edge of the step before he came in. The Nobles greeted him warmly. "Come in, Mr. Wolverton. Oh, don't bother about your shoes. Sit here, Mr. Wolver-

ton. How is Mrs. Wolverton? I want you to thank her for the gingerbread."

George Wolverton sat down heavily, breathing a little hard. He was a short, stocky farmer with a thick, reddened face and a strong outcropping of dark brown beard. When the Nobles had first come to Grandview he and his wife had still been living in the country. Mr. Noble had been called upon to "bury" their daughter. They had never forgotten it. Ever since they had showed their friendliness in a thousand ways. They had had the Nobles out to the farm; and since they had moved into town had still been eager to show them kindness. Especially Mrs. Wolverton, of whom people said that she was one of the best women in the world, pure goodness. She had always been doing something for them, it seemed. Just today she had sent over a plate of fresh gingerbread warm from her oven.

"Well, George, how's the farm coming?"

"Oh . . . I ain't been out to the farm today."

"Haven't?"

"No. I ain't been feeling just right. Didn't know as I'd get over here to-night."

"You're trying to do too much, Mr. Wolverton. You ought to take it easier now that you've moved into town," Mrs. Noble said anxiously.

"Oh . . . well, I don't know," he mumbled, turning redder.

No one spoke for a time.

"Well, I'll leave you gentlemen to your work," Mrs. Noble fluttered.

She slipped into the kitchen where, after wandering softly and restlessly about, she sat down in the old chair by the window. It was so familiar to her. It was one that she and Mr. Noble had bought when they had first started housekeeping. It had gone on all their wanderings with them and stood in many kitchens. She looked out at the pale evening sky patterned by the thin twigs of the lilac bush.

She kept wondering whether George

Wolverton had not acted a little strange. But then, he had said that he wasn't feeling well.

It did not seem to her that she could stand it if they should have to tear things up and move again just as the place was becoming a home. She thought of the long years they had had, the changes they had made—from town to town, county to county. All the flowers and the bushes they had planted, and then left before the blossoms came. Sometimes she had a cold storage doubt of the work of the Kingdom. Mr. Noble made light of things. But she could tell. She was living in a kind of constant dread. She did not see how anyone could find a thing to bring against Mr. Noble. "But if they really want to, they'll find *something*," she thought. No one could drive John Shattuck out of his place in the bank when he made shady deals and struck hard bargains, as everyone knew that he did. Why should they have to owe their home and their living to the personal feelings of John Shattuck? Every time it grew harder to move. The old kitchen cabinet, the gasoline stove, the geraniums on the window-sill—they were fitted and placed. She could not endure to go through it all again.

Not now. She grew hot when she thought of the ordeal before her. What if this were taken away from her? Where could she go? Arnold might want her, but Bessie . . . Mr. Noble might get another church. But to go to a new place, a bare house again, strangers about. . . .

The voices sounded quiet, with a soothing murmur from Alfred Bliss. But whenever they grew louder she listened and held her breath.

III

THE five men were left in the old-fashioned sitting-room which had been repapered when the Nobles came, and the woodwork varnished. It was an old house which the church had been able to buy at a good figure when the Old Lady Pettibone died. Any other setting

would have been too gay for the Nobles' household goods which for forty years had been freighted about over Iowa. The brown rug with faded arabesques and roses that had been cut down from the old carpet, the combination desk and bookcase, the rockers, the two stiff chairs upholstered in brown rep, the paper holder, Lura's water colors.

They were all acting, at least, as if this were simply a usual meeting—as surely it was.

"I suppose we'd better get through our business," Alfred Bliss said amiably. "Now, Reverend—I think you're the one to talk on this redecorating proposition. I believe the ladies have spoken to you about it. Suppose you put it up to us."

The redecorating proposition was one that annually came up in the Grandview church, and of which it was annually said: "This year we simply must do something about it." The auditorium, which had long been tinted a dim, sad green, with two pillars painted on the wall behind the pulpit, and with fraying strips of red ingrain down the aisles, must be done over. But there were always reasons for putting it off. Taxes to pay, they had fallen behind on their apportionment, they might have a new church some day.

Mr. Noble was eager to have something accomplished this time. It would be a kind of justification of his pastorate. Not like building a new church, of course. But it was a notorious fact among the ministry that the man who built the church would have to go and his successor reap the glory. This would be something done, something to point to and say, "I urged the church to redecorate." He was ashamed of it. Sometimes he thought: What must Jesus think of him when He saw His house so neglected? But he could not urge it as he wished. He felt too uncertain as things were. All he could say was that the ladies wanted it done. They were ready to undertake to raise half the expenses if the trustees would guarantee the other half.

The men listened gravely in their

character of trustee, which they had put on as soon as business was mentioned—Mr. Kemmerer judiciously raising objections in a slightly peevish tone, Alfred Bliss with a good word for everything but not committing himself, Ira Cousins very anxious on the subject of expense, George Wolverton dumb. They were cautious. There were a good many expenses. Repairs on the parsonage—they looked meaningfully at the wall paper—and the kitchen range in the church basement needed fixing. So Brother Wolverton had said.

"Yes, I guess it does," Wolverton admitted. "She's said she had an awful time making it go the last time there was a church supper there. Still, I don't know, that front room looks pretty bad."

Mr. Noble warmed at this mark of loyalty on the part of George Wolverton. Somehow he had expected more opposition than was shown. Although it could not be said that anything was actually accomplished, it was decided that a committee be appointed to look into the matter and report at the next Prayer Meeting or "as soon as seemed advisable." Still, he felt relieved.

Mrs. Noble could tell by the sound of the voices that business was over. She was more than relieved—happy and a little flustered. How silly she had been to go imagining things again! Who could have been pleasanter than Alfred Bliss had been? She thought: "I believe I will pass around those pecans." They were some that her brother's people had sent her from Florida, and she had not yet had a chance to have anyone share them with herself and Mr. Noble. Since this trouble in the church, the ladies did not seem to 'drop in' as they used to do in Morning Sun, where she had had such good friends and been so happy. She had not been well enough to do much entertaining. She hastily got down the nut bowl from the top shelf of the cupboard and went bustling and smiling into the sitting-room. There was nothing she enjoyed more than to play the part of hostess.

"I thought that perhaps you gentlemen would like a few of these nuts my brother's family sent me from Florida. Perhaps they will refresh you after your labors."

She started, smiling, to hand the little burnt wood bowls that Lura had made in the days of pyrography. Alfred Bliss interrupted with a bland majestic wave of his hand.

"Just a moment, please, Mrs. Noble. There's another matter I feel we ought to touch upon before this meeting closes."

Mr. Kemmerer gave a jerk and looked hastily at his watch.

Mrs. Noble slowly put down the bowl of nuts on the table and sat down, looking affrightedly from one to another. A pulse beat in her little wrinkled throat.

George Wolverton looked at the floor and turned crimson.

"Now, as you noticed," Alfred Bliss went on, with a vague sting under the suavity of his tone, "things haven't been running quite as smoothly as we'd like to see them in the church." He lifted one hand and studied each of the fingers. "Now I fear there devolves upon me a very unpleasant duty."

There was an embarrassed, throbbing silence in which they suddenly heard a little sharp twittering from a bird outside.

"Duty," Alfred Bliss repeated thoughtfully. "Now I believe," he went on in a louder tone, "that I have my finger upon the pulse of the church. I believe I understand its sentiment. I believe I am speaking for others beside myself—and for this body."

George Wolverton shuffled suddenly.

"Now as to the cause. The church has a leader. The welfare of the church centers about its pastor."

Mrs. Noble broke in suddenly and tremulously, "I know that Mr. Noble has done all that he could. But there were others. Things were not right from the start."

"Yes, Mrs. Noble," Alfred Bliss said, smiling gently, "that may all be. But instead of healing the breach like a

wise physician, which was his duty under the circumstances, Mr.—the pastor in this case—has only widened it, I fear.”

Mrs. Noble reached tremblingly for her handkerchief. She could hardly believe that this was Alfred Bliss speaking. There was something steely under the pale glow of his eyes.

“Now there has been a little sentiment—a little trouble—but nothing which a man who was truly looking for the welfare of the institution which he served, might not have quietly smoothed over.” He paused again, and the Nobles sat quite still, waiting with fear and yet with wonder for what might be coming—Mrs. Noble tearful, her eyes fixed on Alfred Bliss’ face, Mr. Noble looking down at his hands. “There was—a Presence—in this church”—he spoke with intense solemnity; all the men turned red—“which was not a good influence upon such a body. Now, a wise physician, I believe, would have removed that Presence firmly and quietly.” He took off his glasses, stared at them—put them on and smiled. “This was not done. As to why it was not done, I regret to say that there have been rumors touching the pastor and the lady in question.”

The men were all still and would not look at one another. Mrs. Noble suddenly gasped—did he mean that *Mr. Noble* . . . ? She looked at him in terror, at his spare elderly figure and faded, indignant eyes. *Mr. Noble* . . . If they had said that he did not preach the gospel, she could have understood it, although she would have indignantly denied it. That she would have expected, at a time like this. But this! Never in all these years . . . Her timid, decorous soul grew hot with horror. She had known that they would find something—but who would ever have dreamed of *this*?

Mr. Kemmerer gave a vague, remonstrating grumble.

Alfred Bliss continued smoothly, “Such things have been said. And from reliable sources. Bad things to have

said about the pastor and spiritual leader of a church.”

Mr. Noble cleared his throat. His thin cheeks were flushed. In the mild innocence that he had never outgrown, he had not counted upon such a viewpoint as this. He had been prepared to face doctrinal charges—a haziness concerning the Millennium, too little talk of the Second Coming, too little stress upon the Atonement and the Blood of the Lamb—but he was at a loss with this. He thought of Jesus and Mary Magdalene . . . but Mrs. Frary was not a Magdalene! He was not going to say that she was. Perhaps she was “a little gay.” Mrs. Noble had wondered more than once if she didn’t use “a little something” on her cheeks, which were almost too pretty to be natural, she felt, for a married woman and housekeeper. But he remembered how kind she had been to them on Thanksgiving Day. He thought boldly that there were worse things than being “gay.” Well, suppose she had danced with traveling men?

“Why, I—I think it hardly necessary for me to deny such a—a situation,” he said stiffly. “I am surprised that such an interpretation could be taken.”

“At least,” Alfred Bliss cut in suavely, “there was an amount of interest shown which was very unwise.”

“I took a friendly interest—” Mr. Noble began indignantly.

“Exactly. Very unwise. It wounded some who should have been considered. This was at the very least—injudicious.”

No one seemed able to break the embarrassed silence. Alfred Bliss remained smiling meditatively. Mrs. Noble sat with her head bent over her fingers that were working tremulously in her lap.

Mr. Noble raised his head and attempted to speak out of the daze that enfolded him. But it was only dutifully, without conviction, as if he felt the hopelessness of his cause. “I explained at the time my objections to the lady being ejected from the church. I believed that she was not shown justice, and that she was a useful member. Any other interpretation—”

"You have called upon her since, I understand."

"I have," he said stiffly. "Mrs. Noble and I have both continued friendly relations with—with the lady."

"I have always been with Mr. Noble," Mrs. Noble spoke up quaveringly, "except once when I was not well enough to go. But I do not see how anyone could say such a thing of Mr. Noble." She sobbed.

"I am very sorry that you should have to hear these things, Mrs. Noble," Alfred Bliss said with majestic patronage.

"It isn't that I should hear them. It's that they should be said. And by those whom we believed—"

"Now you understand that I am quoting from general opinion," Alfred Bliss said hastily. "I am speaking for the church as a body."

"I do not believe that the church as a body could ever believe such things of Mr. Noble," Mrs. Noble asserted proudly, with a quavering voice.

Alfred Bliss dismissed the matter with a slight wave of the hand. "But there is another point. Objection is taken in many quarters to the pastor's interpretation of the scriptures. Now, liberality is a very good thing in its way, no one is a greater believer in a certain amount of liberty than myself, but it can be so infu-u-used into the discourse as not to wound the beliefs of the older members of the congregation. We have lost some of our best members on this ground," he continued dolefully. "The church cannot afford to lose many such supporters as Amos Woods."

Mr. Noble began to feel upon familiar ground.

"A pastor must preach the truth as it is given him to see it," he began firmly.

Alfred Bliss did not give him time to go on.

"Then there is this point," he said hastily. "There has been complaint on the part of some of the younger members—" ("Homer Shattuck!" Mrs. Noble thought with a frightened pang.

"I knew it. I never trusted him." Other things went hastily through her mind—Homer Shattuck and Mrs. Frary, Mrs. Frary laughing once about "the divine Homer" . . .)—"a complaint that the young people are falling out. In fact, it has been felt that a younger man was needed to put new blood into the institution."

Mrs. Noble trembled. Mr. Noble said, "As to that, I cannot judge. But I will say that I came to this church—Mrs. Noble and I—to give it the best of our endeavors—and further the work of the Kingdom in this community. In whatever I have done I have followed to the best of my ability the dictates of my conscience. I believe that the church should give me a chance to prove that this is true. I believe that the company of God's children can only defile itself by listening to such idle and malicious slander."

He said this firmly. Mrs. Noble listened with fearful worship to his eloquence and boldness. There was a deprecating murmur.

"It is more for Mrs. Noble's sake than my own," he continued somewhat unsteadily. "This is very hard upon Mrs. Noble. It comes at such a time . . . I should feel the cruelty of a removal at such a time and under such a pretext."

The other men stirred uneasily.

Alfred Bliss continued blandly after a moment, "I feel for the pastor's sentiments. I am sure that we all entertain great sympathy for Mrs. Noble. Personally we may deplore . . . but the good of the church. . . . The church is woefully divided. These rumors that I believed it my duty to touch upon, whether they may or may not have foundation, do the church harm. Its leader must be stainless. I fear that it will never be united under its present leadership," he ended mournfully.

Mrs. Noble gave a sudden piteous glance at the other men. George Wolverton was still staring at the floor, his face a dark red. Ira Cousins was scraping his chin with his forefinger. Mr. Kemmerer kept a gloomy and longing

look upon the door. Surely one of them would speak.

"Well, of course," Ira Cousins said suddenly, "Shattucks and Woodses are awful heavy payers. It's hard on the church to lose their subscriptions."

Alfred Bliss looked dignified.

Mr. Kemmerer hitched himself up and said reluctantly, "I don't agree with all that has been said. But I believe the welfare of the church must be considered. . . ." His voice trailed off, then he gave another hitch and shot out resolutely: "Personally I do not fall in with these aspersions on the pastor's character. But of course the church demands . . ."

"Exactly, exactly," Alfred Bliss said. He made a slight solemn pause, then went on: "Now I think that I am speaking the general sentiment, through the trustees, when I say that it would be the wisest act for the pastor to tender his resignation. I think we are quite willing to put it in that way." Mr. Noble did not look up. "Or it will be the duty of the church to call a meeting, and the discussion would be of an unpleasant nature. I would avoid that—for Mrs. Noble's sake."

Mrs. Noble looked slowly up from her trembling fingers. There was nothing to be hoped from Mr. Kemmerer—he was fidgeting with his watch, only anxious to be out of it all. Nor from Ira Cousins. He would go as the rest went. There was only George Wolverton. She remembered all his kindness—the times he had come for them from the farm in his old shabby car, and how when he had taken them home he had loaded the back with apples. Always so generous and so good. His hard, significant grip of the hand the day his little girl was buried, when Mr. Noble had tried so hard to make it all easier for them. But here was something even more powerful than that. He sat breathing hard, and flushed, studying his fingers, distressed and embarrassed but never looking up.

They had known of this, all of them. George Wolverton had known. That was why he had come so late and acted

so strange. "She" had known. That was why she had sent the gingerbread. It was all that she could do.

"Yes. Very well," Mr. Noble said in a small voice. "I will tender my resignation."

Alfred Bliss rose, courteous and effusive with consciousness of duty performed, brushing the neglected bowl of pecans with his coat as he passed the table. He spoke of the night: "Beautiful night. Fine moon. Clear as a bell." Ira Cousins shamefacedly followed him. Mr. Kemmerer, with an embarrassed look, pressed Mrs. Noble's fingers and murmured: "I hope you do not think there is anything personal. Charges absurd, of course. But you know there are some that are determined, and then you understand that it's no use. . . . You must let me drive you and Mr. Noble out in my car once more." She returned the pressure wanly. George Wolverton waited, uneasily fingering his brown felt hat.

"Well, I'm awful sorry it had to come to this," he muttered. He felt a dim reproach in their eyes. "But it's no use saying a word when Bliss and Shattuck and them gets started. It was just the same with the last man—wasn't anything against him as far as I could see."

"But such terrible things to say about Mr. Noble! We never *dreamed*"—Mrs. Noble quavered.

"It was simply a pretext," Mr. Noble asserted.

"Oh, sure. Oh, no one'll really believe all that. Still, when things gets talked around . . ." George Wolverton finished vaguely.

"They were determined to get me out, and there was nothing—"

"Oh, sure. I guess that's so. Course you know we folks don't take any stock in that. Course, she's—well, she's kind o' gay, but then . . . "She's real het about it. But I told her it didn't do no good."

"And to think it should have been Mr. Bliss!" Mrs. Noble said.

"Oh, Bliss! I'd rather deal with

Shattuck any day than him. Yeh, he's smooth, Bliss is. Well, I guess he's a politician. Sure, he's been one of the worst ones. Him and Shattuck are right in together. You know he's got stock in the bank, Bliss has. Or it's his wife that has, I guess. But then it's the same thing. Yeh, he's a politician," George Wolverton repeated, with pride and satisfaction in the definition. "Well . . . I guess 'she'll' be in tomorrow. 'She' wants you folks to take dinner with us some day soon. Well . . . awful sorry it had to come to this. Goodnight."

IV

THEY let him spiritlessly out of the door, then turned back to the room that held their worn household gods. Even yet they did not half understand the blow that had fallen. They felt beaten, old and dazed. They had no strength to struggle or even talk.

"I thought *he* was a friend at least," Mrs. Noble murmured bitterly.

"I suppose he's like the rest," Mr. Noble said wearily. "Their interests are all tied up together."

"He might have stood up for you when Alfred Bliss was saying those wicked things," she asserted.

He did not answer. Dazed images of Mrs. Frary, handsome, active, smiling, came before him. He thought of his staid worried ministerial calls upon her. The absurdity of the whole thing confounded him. Himself and Mrs. Frary—that it should be possible!

His wife felt his silence. Perhaps it was in the minds of both of them that the Lord had "forgotten" them, that He had not looked after His own. But they were too weary to complain, to even think about it. There were things that touched them more closely.

"Why should we have to leave our home for them?" she demanded. "Why should people like that always have it to say?"

He did not answer.

She began to cry weakly. He put his arm around her.

"Mamma, don't take it that way. We'll get along."

"I told you they'd find something," she sobbed. "I had a feeling." She put her head against his shoulder and moaned: "Our last place. To be driven out of it like this—just because a few people were offended! What have we been working for all our lives? . . . I thought Alfred Bliss was such a good man. He always talks so nice about his wife. He was working against us all the time he was so pleasant."

He kept patting her shoulder consolingly, although his mouth was twisted wryly under the drooping gray mustache.

After a while she murmured: "Now, I'll have nowhere to go."

He roused himself to cheer her. "Yes, you have. There's Arnold—"

"Oh no. You know Bessie's never been friendly. I couldn't bear to go there and be a burden."

"We'll have a new place by then," he said valiantly.

She moaned: "It doesn't seem as if I could stand it starting in a new place and having it all to go through with again. Besides, they'd hear of this and be opposed to you. And we're getting old. . . . I'd better not have my operation. What does it matter? And there'll be no salary. . . ."

"Yes, you will! We're not beggars yet!" he cried stoutly. "If I shouldn't get a church right away, there are other things. I'll find something." He thought vaguely of insurance, being an agent for something . . . "Don't you worry, mamma. I've always taken care of you and I always will."

"Yes, but . . . and there's our old age. I wanted Lura," she sobbed.

"You're going to have Lura," he asserted.

She shook her head. "I won't get over it."

They locked the doors again, turned out the lights, and went to bed. The rose-bush whose blossoms Lura would not see tapped desolately against the bedroom window. The old bed creaked as if protesting against the pain of another journey.

Alibi

By C. R. Seabrook

I

I WAS probably about six or seven years old at the time. I think that it was in the late autumn. Those are details which would not register particularly upon the mind of a child and which, as a matter of fact, are irrelevant. But other details crowd my memory and make it possible for me to make you understand something of the situation as it existed.

We lived in a little town in the Valley of Virginia. My father had recently been called there to take charge of the leading church. I remember the journey down the valley through blossoming orchards and by gently ambling brooks. I remember the importance which I felt as we rode from the station in the carriage with the two black horses.

My mother was a very beautiful woman. As a boy, and even in later years, I sometimes wondered why she was so severe in the treatment of her clothes. It was a long time before I understood that her entire attitude toward life was governed by an inborn sense of superiority accompanied by an unwillingness to compete with others on any common ground. Mother was an unconscious snob.

My father was always in the background as a power to be respected. At infrequent intervals he emerged to play with us in a clumsy fashion. Unlike most fathers his absence was only occasional and his shadow was ever present. His study was in a wing of the house and adjacent to the main hall. We—there were two other children, a

brother and a sister, both older than I—were daily cautioned against any noise or disturbance in the vicinity of the study door or outside the windows. When father came out of the study it was usually to go about some congregational duty. I think that from my very earliest memory I was afraid of him.

As a son of the clergyman I was, with the other children, taught most of the tenets of a rigid, narrow faith and in a hard, unbending manner. Even now I can remember my childish difficulties over the text which compared God to our father and cautioned us to fear him and to love him. Sin became an ever present menace, but the things which were sin remained vague and undefined and singularly fascinating. Thou shalt not steal. That was easy. Thou shalt not bear false witness. That meant not to lie. Thou shalt not commit adultery. No questioning ever solved that mystery.

For some reason the children of our neighbors were never very intimate. I think that they misunderstood and resented the aloofness of my mother, whose severity must have appalled even more mature persons. Certainly we were taught to hold ourselves a little higher than the neighbors' children. We understood that a position was ours and that we must maintain it. Caste, class, intellectual ascendancy, all that goes with these ideas was hammered home on every occasion.

Quite early I learned to lie. It was the easiest way to evade the consequences of some act which I knew by sad experience would displease my

parents. In looking back I think that most of these lies were made necessary by things which were actually not in any way wrong or harmful. I learned to lie successfully. The result was that on those occasions when I was caught I was caught red-handed and completely. And when I was caught I was punished. Father's study became the place of punishment. Quickly I learned that it was necessary to permit him to strike, once, twice, three times, before I began to cry and then to sob brokenly, "I'm sorry, Dad, and I'll try to be a better boy." Then he would put his arms around me and pray and have me ask God to help me. And then I would pass out a little resentful and quite misunderstanding.

In father's study, over a big table, there was a picture that I always feared. An old, old man with a great beard was sitting on a stone. There were little round holes in the centre of his eyes and deep shadows sometimes seemed to make them move. He wore a strange robe something like a night-gown. In one arm he held two big flat stones with mysterious figures on them. One arm was lifted high above his head. I thought that he was God. In later years I came to realize that it was a photograph of Michelangelo's Moses. But all through my life when I have spoken with men of God and faith I have always seen that picture, harsh, cruel, forbidding.

I think that, aside from the restrictions intimated by what I have said, we were normal, happy children.

And then one day I discovered the use of money.

I can recall the details vividly. Remember, this was in Virginia not long after the War. Comparative poverty was the rule and none of the children of the neighborhood had any spending money. We rarely saw money in any form. This day I had been with mother on a walk and she stopped to make a purchase in some store. Some simple groceries probably. I saw her give the man behind the counter some coins and I saw him give her a package of some-

thing to which she had pointed. In a glass covered and fronted case were many varicolored candies. These I found by inquiry could also be acquired by the transfer of some of the coins. I think that mother bought some for me, but of this I am not sure.

I do know that I haunted the little shops from that time on watching people come and go and make their purchases. I saw a child come occasionally and purchase candy. The small amount of money which was kept in the house reposed in a brown wooden cabinet which stood on the table in the living-room. I discovered this when I saw my mother remove some of the coins therefrom on a day soon after my having first become aware of the uses of money.

On an afternoon when the old house was very still, father in his study, the other children at play in the yard, mother away on some duty of the church, I stole quietly into the room and approached the cabinet. Under a light touch the lid swung back on horizontal hinges and before me was a tray covering the full area of the box.

This tray was divided into small compartments, perhaps a half dozen, of various sizes and shapes. In the smallest compartment were many coins, some of them small brown ones, some smaller but grayish-white, some silver and shiny and big. In the other compartments were a miscellaneous array of trinkets and papers. Bits of jewelry. An ivory fan. A lock of brown hair tied with a blue, faded ribbon. I closed the lid and crept out of the room. The rest of that afternoon I played only half-heartedly with the other children and I think that we quarreled before the day was over.

A long time must have passed before I again ventured into the now enchanted room. But the day finally arrived. I cannot now remember the various processes through which I struggled before I finally arrived at one definite conclusion: everything in the house was father's or mother's. I was theirs. Bread, cakes, food, the apples and the

peaches on the trees in the back garden, they were ours. The coins in the little box must be ours also.

I did not ask for a coin. I have often wondered what might have been the result had that action occurred to me. I suppose I must have realized that the brown cabinet, like some of the bookcases and the lock-pantry, was forbidden although, unlike the places mentioned, no word had ever been passed by my parents concerning it.

In any case I crept in very quietly after having made sure that there was slight chance of being observed. I recall the fact that I wondered if there was any special arrangement of the coins which would betray signs of disturbance. Once I had heard my father reprimand a darky maid for having moved a book from a certain place in the shelves and I had wondered at the time how he could tell, with so many books, that one had been moved. The thought never occurred to me that there was any way to keep track of the coins except as I kept track of my marbles, there was a blue alley, a gray and black one, one which was deep red. I know that I had not learned to count.

Gently I raised the lid. There was one small gray-white coin lying apart from the remainder. I picked this up and put the lid down again as quietly as I could.

There was a little shop on the same street as our home. A shop where all sorts of things hung in festoons around the walls and ceilings and where there were many barrels and boxes which exuded strange odors. I think that it must have been a general grocery store. Perhaps the fat little man who presided over the destiny of the establishment had a name. If I ever heard it I have long since forgotten it. I know that he was chubby and round and that he smiled at me as I pushed the door ajar. In a big box, behind a glass cover, were chocolates, lickers, gumdrops. To one of the last I pointed. "Please give me one of those." I put the small coin on the counter, which I could just

reach. My surprise was great when the fat little man gave me two of the gumdrops and a small handful of brown coins slightly larger than the gray-white one which I had given him.

I left the store and hurried back toward my home. The street was one of many broad maple trees and the houses were old and built close to the broad brick sidewalk. Furtively I crept along in the shadows and paused before I went in at the gate leading to our garden. I heard the voices of the other children playing under the apple tree. There was a long passageway from the gate, along the house, back to the kitchen entry. We hardly ever paused in going through this way, for we were intent either on going out or coming in. Here, under a bush, close to the wall of the house, I hid the brown coins, watching carefully that no one should observe me.

The gumdrops, clasped tightly in my hand, had become soft and sticky and did not look very nice to eat. I wondered whether to offer them to the other children and I remember that I decided not to because they would ask where I got them. I hung on the outskirts of the little group for a few moments and then went far back to the vegetable garden near the barn. There were lilac bushes there and behind those bushes I sat and munched my sweets.

II

I HAVE only a very hazy memory of succeeding events. No one discovered the hiding place of the little brown coins. Nothing was said of the brown cabinet. I contrived to stay close around the house and whenever my mother went into the living-room I found some excuse for following. One day I watched her take all the little coins out of the compartment and pass them from one hand to the other as I did with my marbles when I wished to observe their varied colors. She also took some of the coins and put them in a little bag which she sometimes carried.

It is curious that all of these things come back to me now after so many years. Certainly there are other memories which are more pleasant. Memories of many happy days under the trees when no untoward circumstance intruded. Memories of evenings about the big open fire when affectionate intimacy wiled away the winter coldness. My departure from the paths in which children are supposed to walk could not have been very frequent.

A long time passed. The store of brown coins hidden by the pathway was used. Another trip to the brown cabinet brought results similar to the first experience. With one exception. At supper mother spoke to my father, "John, did you take any money out of the box?" Father said, "No." Mother looked a bit puzzled and added, "Well, I guess that I counted it wrong."

Counted it wrong. "What is counting, Mother?" I am sure that I shall never forget her smile at my question. I know now that there was something of the all-mother which I have since come to understand is a part of every woman who has ever borne children. And I think that there must have been a little of sadness in her smile. Certainly I remember it. And her response puzzled me.

"You are growing up! See. Here is a fork."

She reached over to an adjacent place.

"Here is another fork. That makes two forks."

And then she counted for me, one, two, three, four, five, six, all the way up to ten.

For days after that I amused myself vastly by counting. Trees, chickens, marbles, persons. And I knew how mother knew that someone had been to the cabinet.

The next time I went to the little pile of coins in the cabinet I took with me the last one of the brown heap from beside the pathway wall. This one I placed in the compartment and took away another white-gray coin. That

made the count right. It is a very long time ago and it is possible that some of the details are blurred but the highlights are clear and distinct.

I must have made many trips to the cabinet.

And one day I crept in and took hold of the lid very gently. I raised my hand. The lid would not move. It was locked. I crept out and into the sunlight and far to the back of the garden. Tightly I clasped the brown coin which I had intended to substitute so as to keep the count right. I can still feel the quiver of anxiety which shook my body as I considered the meaning of the locked lid. Something had gone wrong. And there was a vista of many days without candy. I fingered the coin and tried to figure out some scheme for expanding its purchase value. By this time I knew that it was only for the gray-white coins that the fat little man would give me candy and brown coins.

I went to the store. There were some new kinds of candy that day and I wanted them but even more I wanted to hold on to the one bit which might enable me to continue my purchases. I know that I finally took the coin back and hid it again by the wall.

How many days elapsed before I again ventured to the cabinet I do not know. Many, in all probability. I was afraid. But I went back. Again mother had gone about some visiting duties. Hatted and gloved I had seen her go down the street. Father was in the study. The other children were playing in a neighbor's yard. I also remember that it was a day of brilliant sunlight.

Once inside, the house was cool and there were many deep shadows. All the windows were equipped with heavy shutters and these were drawn close. The curtains rustled in a gentle breeze and frightened me as I crept into the room. There was hardly any light in the corner by the cabinet and into the gloom I crept and stood very still. All about me I could hear the voices of the old house, the creak of a shutter, the

groaning of a timber in the floor, the scurrying of a rat in the wall.

I let my fingers feel over the surface of the cabinet. I found a little hole just below the line where the lid joined the body. Just a narrow little slot.

I knew about keys. There was one in the front door, a big, heavy, brass one and when it was hung on the wall inside the door I could peep through the keyhole and out into the street. I had always been fond of the restricted vision so procured. And some place there was a key to the cabinet. And it must be a little key, the slot was so small. Sometimes in the mornings I was permitted to go into mother's room and play while she worked at her sewing. I had seen several little keys on her dressing table.

I slipped up the stairs as quietly as I could and paused when a tread creaked under my tiny weight. The door to her room was ajar. The floor boards made a moaning noise as I crossed the room. The keys were there. One was very much smaller than the rest. I took it and went back the way I had come.

As I passed through the hall I heard father walking in his study and I detected the rumble of his voice. He had a queer habit of talking to himself when he was in there behind the closed door and sometimes on Sunday I remembered some of the words which he used in his sermons as having been heard first from that room. Presently the movement and the rumble ceased and I went on to the cabinet.

The key went into the little slot. I turned it as I had seen father turn the front door key. Around and around and around it went. I turned it the other way. Again it went all the way around. I knew that I should hear a little click which would mean that the lock was open. I did not hear it. I pushed the key further in until I could just feel the top of it. I could feel metal grating against metal. Carefully and slowly I turned again.

And then I heard a footstep. It

crossed the hall. Paused beyond the open door. A shadow blocked the dim light which came through the shuttered windows. I cowered deep into the corner by the cabinet. A moment more and my father stood beside me.

III

IN the years which have passed since that day I have felt physical fear many times. Beneath parching desert suns with only a drop of water in my canteen. Smiling in bravado into the wide round snout of an automatic pistol. Cringing under the bitter lash of a woman's righteous scorn. But never has fear come to me as it did that day with my father's shadow. I was all cold and my face burned.

He spoke. "You—you little—you little devil!"

I felt the fear leave me.

I knew what devils were. The long hours in church on Sunday were monotonous and I hated them but always there was a certain hope that perhaps he would talk of some of the wicked men out of whom Jesus cast seven devils. Or the wicked woman with one devil who had sinned the scarlet sin. I often wondered what kind of a sin a scarlet sin was. And there was Mary, the darky cook, she had told us of devils, all sorts of devils, and of why they were devils. I knew that Satan was the chief of all the devils. And now I knew why I was different from the other children. I knew why I liked to wander furtively in the shadows and why I did so many things which they never seemed to think of. I was a little devil. I was not afraid any longer.

My father spoke again. I felt the trembling in his voice. "Have you taken money out of that box before?" I remember that I felt rather sorry for him when he asked that question. Often when we spoke as children do among themselves in make-believe we were cautioned, "Don't be silly." I knew now what silly meant and I was sorry for him. I said, "Of course I have."

I felt myself lifted from the floor. And still I was not afraid. The collar of my little vest hurt my throat. I remember every instant of the passage through the hall to the study. Father stood me by his table and sat down and put his head on his arms which he had thrown out before him. His shoulders shook and he made queer noises with his throat. I stood and watched him and thought, don't be silly.

We had had a dog some time before and there was a bit of small leading rope hanging on a rack. I watched him as he reached out for this. Then he took hold of me and bent my body over his knee and I heard the swish of the rope through the air before I felt the impact on my bottom. And still I was not afraid. How long he beat me I do not know. It hurt, I can still remember that, but I did not cry. I felt that that would have been what he called silly. Silly and foolish.

When he stopped beating me he dropped the rope and I slid out of his arms. He sat and looked at me for what seemed a very long time. Then

he spoke and again I felt like saying, "Don't be silly."

"Why did you do it?"

If he didn't know I couldn't tell him. But I did say something. I think it was, "I wanted the money."

I stood there with my back burning under the hurt of the lashes and shifted from one foot to the other wondering when he would let me go. I had been punished. I understood that. Why keep me there? He sat and looked at me for what must have been actually many minutes. Just silent, watching me as if he had never seen me before.

When he spoke his voice was strange and slow and unfamiliar, "If—if you ever do that again I'll send you away to a place where they send boys who steal."

I remember that I said, "Yes, sir."

IV

THEY tell me that tomorrow they are going to hang me. It was rather silly and foolish of that watchman not to have shot, too, when he saw me kneeling by the vault.



Trivia

By Muna Lee

OUT of a world of things, some few you share with me.
Not loneliness, nor pain,
Nor poignance of sheer beauty need there be
To wake your voice again.

A shop-window stuffy with fabrics, where a dull vase smoulders blue—
Gleam of wet roofs in the distance—steps hurrying past through the night
—And pausing, I rededicate to you
A song I shall not write.



Man in Love

By Charles G. Shaw

I

CRITICISM, dealing with love, acts as a boomerang.

When a man criticizes the woman he loves, he actually criticizes himself for having fallen in love with her.

II

Woman is appealing to man in the inverse ratio that she is inquisitive about him.

III

The successful fellow with women is the one who treats them with perfect manners but is never polite.

IV

A woman prefers a man who is right to a man who is wrong. But she likewise prefers a man who is sympathetic to one who is right.

V

The fellow who announces that because he has been constantly disillusioned in women he thoroughly understands them is analogous to the detective who claims that, because he has been unable to expose a rogue, crime does not exist.

VI

But few factors are necessary to attract a man to a woman. It is the girl who produces an occasional chuckle for him, who squeezes his arm at the right

moment, who is sympathetic and appreciative with a touch of beauty, who will cause him to blush, stammer, throw himself at her feet, and vow to be true to her for life.

VII

Love is blinding. And rare is the fellow who is able to distinguish in the woman who ensnares him ingenuousness from ignorance, simplicity from stupidity, modesty from embarrassment.

VIII

Surely man manufactures romance when he is alone and not while in the society of his lady love. When with her he is invariably seeking to impress her, to divert her, to fascinate her. But it is during the lonely stroll home of a sultry summer evening that he engages in the tender pastime of constructing a thousand pretty fancies. It is then he pens pictures in his imagination of moonlight, of honeysuckle, of moist lips, of scented silk, of heart sighs, and of the girl he loves.

IX

Every man has his off days, moments when he is not himself, times when he feels completely out of drawing. It is the woman who appreciates, or at least pretends to appreciate, him during these intervals who can lead him by the nose wherever she may care to, once he resumes his normal equanimity.

X

The Perfect Man seldom fetches the

69

Clicquot 1906 in girls. Such a fellow is almost certain to become so irritating after brief acquaintance that his very merits become intolerable. His constant correctness, his continual failure to make mistakes, his perpetual properness combine to disturb a woman so greatly that she gladly turns to the other extreme. Nothing attracts women to men so much as a touch of fault, or repels them so much as the absence of it.

XI

The girl of many suitors invariably loses the best of them. This may be explained by the fact that those who approach the Real Thing will invariably lose interest once they realize the object of their attentions is likewise encouraging fellows of a vastly inferior calibre. Nothing disillusion a man so much as the failure to discriminate in men on the part of the woman he courts.

XII

The logic of woman: the mask of love that she adopts in order to deceive the man she wishes to marry.

XIII

The logic of man is epitomized by the fellow who, having been duped by woman again and again, and having thoroughly convinced himself that ninety-nine women out of a hundred are shallow, revengeful, deceitful and petty, marries a saucer-eyed doll he has known scarcely two whole weeks.

XIV

A man's efforts to delight a woman are valued by her as factors of no small consideration. The gifts with which he showers her, the hours he devotes to her, the thousand and one little kind-

nesses he bestows upon her, she surely appreciates for their full worth. Yet superhuman must be the effort on the part of a man to atone for the omission of a single act, however trivial, that a woman deems a necessary one.

XV

Man builds romance out of memories, woman out of anticipations.

XVI

How often will a man mistake the moth for the star, the grain for the chaff, a beautiful woman for a charming one!

XVII

Woman's most powerful weapons: tears, timidity, beauty, powder, ingenuousness, smiles, rouge, simplicity, appreciation, silk stockings, kisses, maspero, tenderness, sympathy, sighs . . . a gingham dress. Man's most powerful weapon: another woman.

XVIII

It requires but one bullet to send a man to his death, but one sword thrust, but one swallow of cyanide of cacodyl, but one sniff of nascent hydrocyanic acid, but one air bubble in an artery, but one woman.

XIX

When a man becomes engaged to a woman he builds a bridge of hope between conjecture and fate. When he marries he burns the bridge.

XX

When a man begins to realize that he has been a fool over a woman he also begins to realize that he no longer loves the woman.

For a Man of Your Age

By Thyra Samter Winslow

I

THERE always seemed to be a pause and then an unheard orchestra crashing out a "ta-da" whenever Arlington Kenny entered. He never just came into a place. He carried with him an aura of importance, of dominance. He always seemed a bit aloof from the crowd, too much of a personality to melt into any mob.

Those who attended New York's first night theatrical performances were familiar enough with Arlington Kenny's appearance. He was always present at the opening of the "Follies" and the first nights of plays presented by Dillingham, Belasco, Arthur Hopkins, the Theatre Guild and, of course, plays of his own. He was seldom alone. He always arrived just a trifle late, not after the curtain had gone up but quite after the lines of onlookers had formed in the theatre foyer. The pause, then the unheard "ta-da" and whispers—"there that's Arlington Kenny . . . with the gray hair . . . just like his pictures," and "yes, Kenny, you know . . . that's Maybelle McIntyre with him . . .", and "look, quick, Arlington Kenny. . . ."

At the theatre, Kenny usually occupied a lower stage box, though sometimes his seat was well down in front. Sometimes he was with one man, well known but not always of the theatre, a physician, perhaps, or a scientist, sometimes a minister of the gospel. Silent men, those who accompanied him, as Arlington Kenny himself was usually silent. Yet you felt, if you were one of the audience who came to watch just such people as Arlington Kenny, that

the things he and his friends said were of great importance. He would lean over, quietly, and whisper something. His friend would whisper back. A smile, then. What had they said between their silences?

Kenny was often with a feminine companion or with another man and two women—girls, rather. The girls who accompanied Kenny were always young and always pretty. Youth and prettiness seemed to be their chief requirements. Too, they were little girls of a distinctly ingénue type, running to large, expressive eyes and fluffy hair. They were always bubbling girls with giggles and dimples and good complexions. They were always being starred or about to be starred by Kenny. One of Kenny's chief claims to fame, beside the fact that he was one of New York's most successful theatrical managers, was his ability to find stars. He was forever finding them. Half a dozen well-known ingénues had been his discoveries. "If Arlington Kenny takes a fancy to a girl her future is made," was almost an article in the American Credo.

For years, now, Kenny had been making stars. It was expected of him. That each star in turn was his mistress, or supposed to be his mistress, added greatly to his reputation. The little girls he picked out from almost anywhere were thrust immediately into lives of luxury, given charming little silken apartments, teachers, from English to riding, and carried in a season or two from oblivion to bits and up to stardom. After that, anything could happen to them. They could continue to star, even under other managers, as

long as their youth lasted, and then sink into the oblivion from which they had been lifted. They could continue to act in smaller roles, they could marry, with varied success, and settle down, the glamor of their stage careers still floating around them. It was expected that Arlington Kenny would make stars. It was one of the things by which he had built up his importance.

Outside of first nights at the theatre, openings of the gayer after-theatre restaurants and "clubs" and the parties given by the most important of the theatrical and literary organizations, Kenny was not seen much in public. He did not eat in the restaurants patronized by men of his profession. He did not stroll on Broadway or even on Fifth Avenue. He belonged to a few fairly exclusive clubs but did not visit them frequently. He created the impression, always, of aloof superiority and dignity.

Kenny, at around sixty, was not unattractive. Never a handsome man early in life, years had brought him a certain complacency and grooming that passed for good looks. His rather square face had rounded out and reddened a little. His hair, an unnoticeable brown in his forties, at sixty was white and attractive. He was a little over medium height, but his shoulders were broad and straight and he seemed taller. He dressed with absolute correctness, as far removed from the average man of his profession as from the theatrical appearance of Mr. Belasco. His arms, a trifle too long as a young man, seemed well-proportioned now that he had filled out and, too, he no longer used them in useless gesture. His nose, a little too large still, seemed less large now that his cheeks were rounded. His eyes, a gray blue, had faded a little, but his lashes and brows added to the impressiveness of his appearance. He wore a flower, usually, and, during the day, a soft gray felt hat in winter and a Panama in warm weather. He was quite worth the look you gave after a whispered, "there . . . Arlington Kenny."

Arlington Kenny was well satisfied with himself. There was no reason why he shouldn't have been. He was not, as a rule, given to introspection. He was accustomed to himself, to his world. He accepted, wholly, the position he had made. He was occupied, always. There were things for him to do, conferences, appointments to be kept. At night he dined with the ingénue that he was most interested in, or with friends. Often he preferred dining alone. During the day he was busy with the theatre, a new play to read, a scenic artist to interview, a talk with a playwright about a difficult or questionable bit. His personal friends were substantial people, rich Jews with homes on Fifth Avenue or in the East Seventies, prominent authors and playwrights who preferred luxury to art and were able to get their preference, well-known lawyers and judges.

It came with a jolt, then, with a painful suddenness, a waking up after anaesthesia when he was brought face to face with himself with things as they were. His dentist did it.

He had thought of the appointment with his dentist the night before—a disagreeable thing, a dentist's office. Well, he had to go through with it. A tooth had been giving him twinges. Might as well face the thing.

When his man waked him up the next morning he gained consciousness with the thought that something unpleasant was in store for him. He thought of the dentist as he bathed and again at breakfast. His secretary came in then, as usual. After his personal mail had been disposed of—he usually attended to other things in his office—his secretary, in a manner a bit too deferential, reminded him again:

"Mr. Kenny, Dr. Sanderson at eleven, you know. . . ."

Driving to his dentist's office he thought of a hundred things, but of his tooth, too. He was a physical coward and he knew it. In his dentist's outer office, pretentious in gray and wicker, the assistant greeted him with a respectful embarrassment and told him,

"Dr. Sanderson will see you right away, Mr. Kenny." Two women, waiting, whispered. He heard sibilant sounds and his name. He was accustomed to that.

In the dentist's chair, meaningless remarks, odors of drugs, an examination, a minute of terrible grinding, the dentist's voice then—that sentence—

"That tooth had better come out, I'm afraid. We'll make X-ray photographs, to be sure. You can't afford to lose another tooth unless it is absolutely necessary. Your teeth are remarkably good at that—for a man of your age."

A man of your age!

That sentence stayed with Arlington Kenny all day. It followed him out of the dentist's office into his own office, was with him at a luncheon concerned with the raising of funds for some charitable movement and at his office later and at dinner that night. A man of your age!

II

Was he really getting old? Old! For the first time in years Kenny seemed face to face with himself, without screen or subterfuge. That night, after he dismissed his man, alone in his bedroom, pajama clad, before he got into bed with a book, as he always did, he examined himself in his mirror, his teeth, his eyes, his hair, his skin. His hair was still thick and it had been white for years. He had wrinkles, of course, and under his chin the skin was flabby. A woman might have looked old, would have had cause to worry . . . if he were a woman, now. Why need he worry? He knew he made a good appearance. So far as looks went. . . .

After all, he had everything, could keep things for years. He couldn't walk as fast or as far. That was true. But there was no need to walk at all. He had given up golf on account of his heart a few years before. On account of his heart? Well, age, too—but men older than he was played golf. His doctor hadn't said "a man of your age," then. No one had said it. Did

they think—his friends, his business acquaintances—that he was getting old?

He knew, now, as he had probably always known, that he had chosen the people around him partly because of the way they treated him, with distinct homage, with careful respect. They kept ugly things from him. He required that. They covered all outside annoyances with a layer of mental cotton-wool. What if they did? He had earned it. You can't get treatment like that unless you earn it, pay for it. He knew that. Years ago he had had to struggle—to struggle hard—for what he got. There had been no cotton-wool in those days. Age . . . what a terrible thing . . . to lose out. . . . When he was young. . . .

Kenny went back over those years, now. He seldom allowed himself the privilege or the pain of rehearsing those old days. His biography in *Who's Who in America* and the various journals in which his name and photographs appeared always used a version more picturesque than authentic. He had kept up with none of the acquaintances of those old days.

His name had been Sussman, years ago. There were those who knew that—but their names, too, had undergone some of the changes or variations that America seems to call for. Isaac Sussman. Of course. The name seemed strange even to Kenny as almost guiltily he muttered it under his breath. Even now he never denied his Jewish ancestry. Frequently, even, he said, "I am proud of the fact that one of my ancestors was of Jewish persuasion." He always neglected to say that all of the others, too, were of the same faith.

He had come to America at thirteen, a frightened, cowed little fellow. Some cousins of his had come before him and met him when he landed. He had had vague ideas of going with them, primitive merchants who, with packs of merchandise on their backs, tramped through the country selling to farmers the wares that the mail-order houses and parcel post later made necessities.

The country was even then outgrowing the peddler. His cousins discouraged him from joining them. They were about to start a store in the Ghetto, as soon as their capital increased a little. Ike might have joined them later as a clerk, if something else had not offered.

A lower East Side theatre needed just such a boy and Ike needed a job. He alternated scene shifting with ushering in the gallery. He ran errands, watched the stage door. As he learned English—he never quite lost a peculiarly heavy “tz” sound instead of “th,” though years later, with careful study, he was able to overcome all accent—he got other jobs around the theatre. He went to school a little but he didn’t care for that. His jobs were mostly at night and daytimes he was below other boys of his age in school. Besides, he hadn’t come to America to go to school.

Then he met Randolph Kenny, fat, good-natured, dictatorial. Kenny, in his cheap loud suits, smelling of whiskey, a wad of tobacco always in his cheek, invectives always on his lips, seemed a wonderful man and of vast importance to little Ike. Kenny was a theatrical manager. He owned a road show, the Randolph Kenny Stock Company, that played, for ten, twenty and thirty cents, melodrama for rural consumption.

Kenny took a liking to Ike Sussman, eager, still shy, a bit apologetic over nothing at all. When Kenny’s show went on the road, Ike went along. Another year and he was playing parts, character bits, combined with his work as property man. Another year and he was a comedian and the assistant manager. The stage hands in the various theatres, when they asked him questions, called him Ike Kenny. The name stuck. Another year and he was Arlington Kenny on the programs. He chose Arlington because he had stayed for a week at a hotel called The Arlington. It was his dream of elegance, his first sight of anything save the cheapest kind of country and city hostelry. “Arlington Kenny” seemed to offer distinct possibilities.

The Kenny show lasted until Ike—Arlington Kenny—was twenty-one. Those were years of week-stands and split-week stands, of poor theatres and poorer hotels in the South and West when Kenny never knew which town he was in and spent his time between the theatre and his boarding place. The food was poor and the accommodations bad, but he didn’t know this for years. He had just begun to rebel, to look forward to something else when Randolph Kenny died of too much poor alcohol and the Randolph Kenny Stock Company fell to pieces.

III

ARLINGTON KENNY was in love with Lottie Baily. It was his first love affair. Lottie had been the ingénue with the show and it was her second season in the show business. She was a slender girl with dark hair and a lisp, a sweet girl, given to little, unnecessary affectations but with a sturdier character than one might expect, a clean little thing who had run away from a rather poor home for excitement. Now, the show broken up, she was in tears. She didn’t want to go back to Rutherfordville. She dreaded going back to Chicago in search of a job in the midst of a not very good theatrical season. Both she and Kenny had saved small sums and had no other resources. She loved Kenny, too. It seemed the logical thing for them to get married. The show broke up in a town that happened to be a county seat. They were married the next day and left for Chicago together.

In Chicago, after weeks of cheap rooming-houses, they were just beginning to get frightened when they met a man who had a “specialty” which used three people. He had just quarreled with the couple who formerly worked with him. Lottie and Kenny were taken on. They soon learned the simple act—a farce with a few cheap songs—burlesque really. A season in this and Kenny became ambitious. He saw better acts for two every day. He could write a better act himself. He could and did.

The next year "Kenny and Baily" had an act of their own. They traveled for two years. In the summer Lottie's only child, a boy, was born. Lottie and Kenny went to Rutherfordville for this great event and, when they started out in the Fall, the baby was kept by Lottie's mother and they sent a money-order every two weeks for its support.

It was with this act that Lottie and Kenny reached New York. Vaudeville was becoming vaudeville, then. They got bookings in New York. Kenny evolved another act which required capital. He met Lou Hartman—the Louis Harper of later years—young and inexperienced, too, but who had a small amount of inherited capital. Together, they put on the new act and when it succeeded they put on another. They acquired a theatre in Fourteenth Street and then another theatre a little farther uptown. Other theatres, then Kenny began to direct companies, to "present" plays. He tasted power.

Lottie retired from the stage and grew pleasantly plump. She made a trip to Rutherfordville and brought back her young son. They took a brownstone-front house and began meeting the theatrical celebrities of the day.

As he grew prosperous, Kenny learned about things. He found that money and success and triumph bring respect and homage. He learned, too, that they brought to him obligations, a group of people who were pitifully sycophantic, who fawned and flattered and begged. It was then that he began to build his wall of superiority, began to withdraw a bit, to be suspicious of overtures.

He learned other things. He entered a world of books and music and art. The years on the road had been particularly blank in regard to these. The years in Germany, as a child, had been too much of a struggle for existence to allow for culture. He knew he could never go back and get a foundation in the arts. He had never read a book until he was twenty. When he could

afford it, he hired a young secretary who had university training and a real love of beautiful things, as Kenny himself had a real love for beauty—and he learned, humbly enough, what he could. It had been during only the past few years that his attitude had become a bit didactic about anything relating to culture.

Lottie hadn't cared about books or music or rugs or furniture. She wanted a nice home and good clothes, servants who did what one told them—she cared little enough about conventional training—good things to eat. She liked going to the theatre on passes and nodding condescendingly to acquaintances. She was never above helping friends she had made during her professional career. Both she and Kenny, in those years, were always finding jobs for people they had known, paying long-due board bills, advancing money that was never repaid.

While Lottie and the boy lived, Kenny was genuinely interested in his home. He noticed younger, prettier women around his theatre, of course, but it was almost impersonal. He was true to Lottie in every accepted sense of the term. It was only natural that he was more interested in the rise of a pretty, jolly little thing who smiled and dimpled and flattered than in an actress who lacked these things. Kenny's taste always ran to ingénues.

Then Lottie and the boy died of fever within a fortnight. Kenny was ill, too, and when he recovered they were gone. For a while his life seemed badly broken up. But, after all, he had never got to know his boy well and he and Lottie had grown apart. He had the theatre. A few years—and Lottie and his son were only memories to him, along with the Kenny Stock Company and "Kenny and Baily in a Refined Song and Dance Specialty."

The theatre closed in on him. He was Arlington Kenny, producer. People gave mental genuflections when he passed. He rolled his power under his tongue, enjoyed his "Arlington Kenny Presents. . . ."

IV

HE found Millie Kensington about this time. "Found" was the word he always used in regard to Millie. About his later discoveries he was more doubtful. He had seen Millie one night in a cheap variety house—one in which he had formerly played. He wrote a note to her the following day. She was sweet and blonde and clever. In six months she had an apartment just off Fifth Avenue and her own horse and carriage. In a year she was playing a leading rôle—stars were not made so quickly in those days. Two years more and Millie was really a popular favorite. Millie was full of energy and had a pleasant voice and a nice manner. She had even a modicum of acting ability. In those days Kenny thought that ability to act was necessary in order to make a successful actress. He did not love Millie, but he enjoyed her. Never a quick or clever conversationalist himself, he liked to listen to her quick wit, her impudent retorts. He gave her the best teachers, was proud of her ability and of her rise. She was afraid of him only for a few months. After that, she took all sorts of little advantages of him and he almost enjoyed it.

Millie married a wealthy man upstate and retired. Kenny missed her and grew restless. He didn't actually need a woman in his life. He liked to live alone with only his servants around him. But he liked the feeling of power that a pretty woman gave him. He liked to feel that he could help her—create her, even. He liked, too, to know that there was an apartment where he would be welcomed at any time, if he were nervous or lonely or out of sorts.

Shortly after that, Kenny fell in love for the second and last time. Her name was Flora Purcell and she was a chorus girl. She had brown eyes and brown hair and some of the little affectations that had made Lottie attractive when she was young.

Flora was a cheap sort but willing enough to encourage the attentions of a manager like Kenny. Kenny took her

out of the chorus and gave her a small part. She was too thin and it took him six months, with a doctor and a trained nurse in attendance, to fatten her up even to a pleasant slimness. She had no ability. It was then that Kenny discovered that an actress can be made quite acceptable to the public if she hasn't an actual physical deformity, is able and willing to work, and has competent teachers.

With his stage manager—one of the best in New York; Kenny began to surround himself with good people as soon as he could afford it—he trained Flora. The two of them taught her how to talk and stand and rise. They taught her the things that most girls know by instinct. She had voice lessons so that she might speak acceptably. Two years later she was an acknowledged Broadway favorite, "a lovely and talented actress," according to the newspaper critics. She played the lightest of parts and played them fairly well after each line had been drilled into her. She had to count the steps she took on the stage. The places where she had to stand were marked. Each voice inflection was rehearsed dozens of times before she was allowed to rehearse with the other principals. She, too, had her apartment and nearly everything she wanted.

Flora had less brains than even Kenny had suspected. She started an indiscreet affair with a blond small-part actor. Kenny found out about it. No other woman ever made a fool of him in this way again.

A girl named Ann Davis, a pretty, pussy-cat little thing, began smiling up at Kenny. He had met her socially. She desired a stage career. He found her more amenable than Flora Purcell. She, too, was drilled in secret. Purcell was given a two weeks' notice; Ann Davis was given her part; and the Purcell sank into oblivion.

Ann Davis became, of course, a favorite. There was no question of real affection between her and Kenny, though they went through the forms of it. He enjoyed being with her as he

always enjoyed a young, jolly, pretty girl. In return for her company and her—in a manner—affection, he was willing to give what he had, which was considerable. Ann Davis starred in one of the popular costume plays of the period and then drifted out of sight, though pleasantly, when another girl gained Kenny's interest.

Other women had followed. Each favorite had become a popular actress and, in these years of easy stardom, a star. Perhaps Kenny actually chose women who had the personality and the ability to become popular. Perhaps his theories about acting were true. He believed that he could make an actress of any woman he wanted to, if she would yield herself to him in the making. Of course he never made an emotional star. His favorites were always the lightest and frothiest of ingénues, but, even at that, they often had their emotional moments.

He surrounded them with everything. He adopted the newest of stage settings and lightings. He gained a reputation for his discoveries and encouragement of new men with talent who needed a hearing. This new talent was inexpensive, gave him the reputation of being a patron of the arts and led to pleasant results. His stars were always with a cast that was excellent—yet not too excellent. Costumes were always the best of their kind. Historical details were absolutely correct. The plays, themselves, were perhaps the weakest point in his productions, but they contained the necessary thrills and smiles and tears. They were the sort that "men could take their sisters to," if, for some perverse reason, they felt so inclined.

This, then, was Kenny, famous as a manager and a maker of stars, a man of importance to whom hundreds made obeisance.

V

HE sighed, now. He climbed into bed with his book. Was this what he had aimed for all the time? Could he keep even this—if he wanted to. This

apartment in town—it was what he liked. His country place on Long Island, that was what he wanted, too. He looked around. His bed, a genuine antique of the Italian Renaissance, was on a raised dais almost like a throne. The heavy posts were beautifully scrolled. The easy chairs were covered with priceless needlepoint. The living-room, across the hall, was full of other antiques, rugs fit for museum pieces, bijouterie he had picked up in travel and gifts from discerning friends. The library, Jacobean oak paneled, contained dozens of first editions and out-of-print things that he had never opened and hundreds of books that he had. Yes, he had done well for himself. Yet—"for a man of your age."

Did they guess, these people who salaamed before him, that he had been little Ike Sussman, frightened and shy? How they would sneer at him if he were that now. How their flatteries would peel away. If he were that—and old, now. . . .

It came to Kenny, then, that if he were old, really old, even as Arlington Kenny he would lose this deference that meant so much to him. He had really built himself up, had manufactured the person who received such courtesy wherever he went. If he were old—and still cared—the way he cared now—it would be hard to lose it all. If he lost power—

If Lottie had lived, things would have been different. They could settle down, now, comfortably on Long Island, with a few servants and a car. The boy—why he'd be grown . . . middle-aged—nearly—he could come back from his own triumphs to see them.

But Lottie and the boy were gone. Lottie had really loved him. If there were only someone who cared for him for himself—as a man. . . . There was no one. Other women—he hated middle-aged women. He was sick of the young girls who had interested him. They were all alike after all—greedy. He had bought them. What of it? They had been eager to be bought. There was no one now and he was glad

of it. He was through—through worrying over engagements and remembering things and pretending interest. Women . . .

Little Helen Durant, the last of the stars he had created, had married four months ago. He had let her believe he was broken-hearted. It was the courteous thing to do. He had given her some lovely china that she admired and a bracelet she had wanted and that he hadn't happened to have given to her. She had a car, an apartment full of good things, no doubt a bank account. She had come out of it pretty well. All the women he had known had. He knew that. Well, why not? He was through with them now. Not a thrill left. He wasn't old, though. "A man of your age!" What foolishness! What does a dentist know? How stupid to worry! Didn't he have everything? Arlington Kenny worrying over a remark a dentist had made!

VI

KENNY woke up the next morning with only a twinge of uneasiness. What was it he had been worrying about? What nonsense! He thrust it aside as he jumped up to take his bath.

There were several letters from women in his mail. He thrust them aside impatiently. Of course . . . young women . . . and their mothers . . . photographs, even. Innocent-seeming letters of girls who knew they had talent and just wanted a chance, a hand up . . . and underneath the knowledge of his reputation and that Helen Durant was married. Let them go . . . women. . . .

His secretary was speaking:

"That about finishes things up for this morning, I believe. Shall I write to Mr. Conant and tell him you don't care about the hunting trip in Maine?—it's next week. I think you said you didn't care about going. . . ."

"Let's see, who's going?" Kenny asked.

His secretary, wrinkling his brow, told him. Then:

"It's a pretty hard trip, you know. With the rheumatism you've had—you told me to remind you about being careful—a trip like that at your age. . . ."

There it was again! Was he really old?

Days passed, weeks even. Kenny watched his friends, listened. Under his urbane, polished, gracious exterior was a fear, a small cringing, a feeling he hadn't felt in years, the feeling of Ike Sussman peering through the veneer that Arlington Kenny had created. "For a man of your age," indeed! He had gone on the hunting trip. The cabins were almost luxurious in their appointments. He had been active, had enjoyed it, really, though it hadn't been awfully good for his rheumatism. Was it deference or care on account of his age that the other members of the party had shown? Was his bed really the most comfortable, the most protected, as he suspected? At least two of them were practically as old as he was. What nonsense! Why, he was Arlington Kenny, of course.

He turned down a new playwright because the play seemed crude to him—at that he had no one to star especially excepting a male lead whom he disliked but who was a favorite with the women. A few months later the playwright was hailed as "a new genius of realism" by the press. The manager who discovered him was spoken of as "a man with the ideals of the new generation in the theatre"—just the kind of praise he liked to hear about himself. A scenic artist who did back-drops in wild color combinations and impossible designs and used no "foots" at all came to him for encouragement and didn't get it. Now, another manager "discovered" him and gained the laurels that went with the discovery. Kenny's name was left out of a newspaper list of progressive men of the theatre. He felt a great fear, almost a physical illness.

Were the people noticing anything around the theatre? He was greeted with the same salaams, the same respect

and homage, yet, little things, a sentence here, a word there. Was something really the matter? He couldn't let go. He must do something . . . must keep up . . . he was Arlington Kenny.

He put on a new play for the male star. It was a fair success. That is, it ran—made money—because the star was popular and the play contained good theatre hokum. There were no great words of praise for Kenny in the newspapers, no talk of "discoveries." He rehearsed another play—one he had bought several months before for a woman character actress full of emotion. He didn't expect it to run very long. Still, he had made contracts . . . might as well. . . .

In the foyer of the theatre on the opening night, Kenny stood as usual watching the people. They bowed to him, as always, pointed him out in little, awed whispers. His sleek dinner jacket fitted him as perfectly as his clothes always fitted. His gray hair made, as always, an interesting frame for his face. Two friends who were to be his guests joined him—a corporation lawyer, an internationally known engineer. They stood together, as usual, almost silent.

"Shall we go in?" Kenny asked. He had felt the current of the crowd . . . perhaps it was the same . . . if he did something right away . . . before it was too late. . . .

A young man rushed up to him, a clever chap he had known for years. The fellow was embarrassed, as people so often were when they greeted Kenny.

"Mr. Kenny," he began, "I—I wonder—if—if you have time, now. Remember, I—I wrote you a few weeks ago—spoke to you, too—about my cousin—Eileen Forrest. She—she is so anxious to meet you. You promised to make an appointment. She is here with me, now. She—she is so eager to get a start—if you could do anything for her—give her just a bit—she's just out of finishing school. . . ."

"Why, yes," said Kenny, graciously, "It's not quite time for the curtain. I shall be very glad. . . ."

The young man hurried away.

The lawyer smiled.

"You can't really be interested in young girls any more, I suppose. How they run after you! Aren't they all really a great deal alike . . . men of our age. . . ."

"For a man of your age," "at your age," "men of our age"!

It was true, then. People did feel that. Age . . . age . . . age . . . Of course he was tired of women! What of it? He—he wasn't getting old! He wouldn't get old—wouldn't give in—give up. . . .

The young man was back again. He had a girl with him. She was quite young, dreadfully embarrassed and yet pleased with herself. She was blonde and slender, pretty with a sort of tender, infantile prettiness. She had big eyes and fluffy hair. She was the kind of girl Kenny had cared most for . . . why, yes, the kind of girl who would look well from the front, whose personality would get over the footlights, who could be trained, molded . . . of course. . . .

Still—women. He looked at her face. Her pretty mouth was petulant. He knew what that would mean, whims to be obeyed, tempers to be calmed. He saw her nose, a bit sharply outlined—greed there. Women . . . these days there were no new surprises. You could see through their prettiness—stupid, boring, monotonous. Was the fault with him, wholly? Perhaps. A few years ago—well, many years ago, he would have accepted this girl as she was, young, fresh, attractive. Now he saw her schemes, her willingness to give herself—sell herself, that is, to an old man—he knew how old he must look to this young girl . . . greed, stupidity . . . selfishness. She would be a bit slow to understand things—wouldn't understand some things at all, ever—there would be no chance for real companionship, of course . . . and yet—youth and prettiness. . . .

People in the foyer were looking, interested. Little Eileen Forrest giggled and blushed.

"My cousin, Eileen," the young man

was speaking, "has been talking of nothing else for weeks . . . since she knew I knew you . . . if you could do anything for her. She is visiting in New York, now. She lives in a horrid little town and hates to go back to it. If you could help her—"

"I do want to stay in New York most awfully," begged Eileen Forrest, prettily. "I don't know how much talent I have, but I'm willing to work hard . . . and I know what wonderful things you've done for other girls. I—I just love Helen Durant's plays. If, if I could have a chance—"

Kenny looked around—at the people who passed, whispering his name. What were they saying? That he was getting old? He'd show them! Another chance, anyhow . . . one more star. They couldn't say anything so long as he kept up. It would be work training Eileen Forrest . . . long hours of work, months of training, being with her, a bore, like as not. She'd probably demand things . . . time . . . money . . . energy. If he were a younger man, now . . . still. . . .

He smiled, the smile of Arlington Kenny, the successful manager.

"Yes," he said, "if you'll come to my office—let me see—I'm leaving town tomorrow for three weeks in Florida . . . three weeks from next Monday, let us say—around twelve. . . . My stage manager and I will talk with you. It's quite likely, if you have ability and will work hard—there may be something. This card. . . .

He scribbled an appointment for her. She couldn't get past office boy and secretaries without that.

"In three weeks, then," he bowed.

Eileen Forrest giggled and disap-

peared on her cousin's arm. Arlington Kenny and his friends passed into the theatre, into the stage box.

Eileen Forrest—it might not be her real name but it was a good stage name—would save him the bother of thinking up one. Of course she couldn't act. What of that? He hadn't even had to find her. She had been thrust at him—a pretty piece of merchandise.

Already he saw the theatre, this theatre after this play had run its run, with Eileen Forrest in a small part, with a love scene or two, in tennis things swinging a racket or in riding breeches—next year a star in a play by a new playwright and some of that awfully splotchy scenery by some modern artist who thought he was doing great things. Electric lights . . . Eileen Forrest . . . newspaper interviews, pictures in the magazines . . . "Broadway's youngest star . . . Arlington Kenny's latest discovery." The same old things . . . giggles . . . flatteries. He would have to furnish a new apartment, take her to see plays, buy her things she wanted—make love to her, even. Well, at least it was possible to go through with it now. A few years more. . . .

"That was a pretty girl," his friend at his elbow leaned forward.

Kenny nodded an agreement. Then:

"Yes, she is. I wouldn't doubt but that she had talent, too, the sparkling, vivacious type . . . I feel she has a future . . . I believe I'm rather a good judge of women . . . for a man of my age," he smiled.

The audience, with respectful awe, watched the great Arlington Kenny and wondered what important thing he had been talking about.



The Nietzschean Follies

VIII

The Muse of Lies

By Benjamin De Casseres

I

Simon-Benét at the Portal

“**W**HAT have you done in life,” asked the Shadow at the Black Portal after he had died.

“Nothing,” replied he who had died.

“Greater wisdom hath no man,” said the Shadow at the Black Portal.

II

The Exploited

THE practical man is one who capitalizes the dreams of poets and visions of mystics. The priest capitalizes the instinct for God and another life. The statesman capitalizes the animal in man and evokes a war. The State capitalizes the sex-instinct and demands legal unions—for a fee. The demagogue and the legislator capitalize the revolutionary instinct. Victor Hugo and Charles Dickens capitalized Pity—and made fortunes out of it. Everything is capitalized; every great man is capitalized and turned into a joint stock company after his death. Death itself is capitalized by the insurance companies and the God-brokers. We are capitalized from the cradle to the grave. Not one of you shall escape.

III

In the Shadow

SUNLIGHT is a great enemy of thought. The brain has a light of its own. This light will not fuse with

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sunlight. One tends to kill the other when they touch. The sunlight gives us happy dreams, but the daring thought is hatched in the shadow or the dark, like a murderous impulse. That Satan loves the dark is a psychological truth, if not an actual one, for nowhere else can the arch-enemy of sham and the mystogogery of optimism find the proper atmosphere for his ironies, his satires and his sacred mountebankery. It is only in the sunlight that we cannot see. Light was the first veil thrown over the Implacable Truth.

IV

Syllogism

I CAN curse the universe; therefore I exist.

V

Cadenza

CURIOUS state of mind: to desire, to imperatively desire, to express something beautifully, rhythmically on paper, and yet have no theme. As I set this down I have not the slightest notion of what I want to say, or whether I have anything to say; but there was an order, a desire, an urge, to take up the pen. The ghosts of a thousand profound reveries, the wraiths of a thousand allegories and emblems of truth are floating around in my brain, but they have not come to their ninth-month. So this is a themeless theme, a theme on a theme,

or what you will. Writing for itself alone? Why not? To substitute the means for the end, to make the means the end: is not that the very essence on dilettantism, scepticism, nihilism, connoisseurism? Every passion justifies itself in satisfying itself—the dimmer the consciousness of *ends* the greater the pleasure of the act. To express one's self, to exude one's self, that is the natural call. What one expresses, what one exudes, is of no importance. Possessing character, angles, the sense of eternity, one *must* always say something. My uniqueness can never be hidden. This differentiates this passion for expression at any cost from the mere scribbler, who is generally a narrator of externals, a reporter. What is literature? Putting a flame in the heart of mere words and winging the syllables. Some thoughts are so great that they do not require words to express them and some words are so beautiful that they do not require any thought to send them into the azure. Hegel had no words for his thoughts; Swinburne had no thoughts for his words. Each had reached the absolute of style. What is beautiful in Hegel is the inexpressible; what is beautiful in Swinburne is the expressible. Here this "themeless theme" ends.

VI

The Hero

WAR is still the great creator of *compulsory* heroism, as the quotidian and ghastly life of the poor is still the creator of *compulsory* grandeur. How much of the heroism, the grandeur, the nobility of private acts is deliberate? One may as well speak of "disinterested motives" or "free will." Pride, Pride, Pride is the eternal ringmaster of the psychological circus, and his assistant is Fear. At the crack of his whip—Pride, like all ringmasters in all circuses, is always in evening dress and wears a high hat, even in the morning—what feats we perform! We mount the back of any old spavined and superannuated paper-winged Al Borak,

turn thrilling somersaults through paper hoops, ride our troubles bareback, with a forced, mooney smile at the audience—quite imaginary—that applauds us (the applause sounds strangely like the particular impact of our own palms on one another). Thrilling! Marvelous! Don't miss your footing! Don't run away (ah! I know that traitorous thought in your soul; that sly plot in your mind!). You must go through with it to the end. You are not happy, heroic, grand or noble. You are simply doing stunts as the whip cracks. And the Ringmaster never sleeps.

VII

Space

I HOLD a telescope to my eye and there is a fixed star at the other end, five hundred billion miles away. I hold a pistol to my temple, and from Somewhere to Nowhere is a matter of two seconds. But both space and time are illusions!

VIII

The Motive

UNTIL we can realize that the essence, the spirit, the very soul of life is irrational, wayward, foolish, perverse, paradoxical, ironic, antic—until we comprehend that man in his heart of hearts desires to do what is harmful, unexpected, surprising, terrible, unreasonable—we shall never have a real history of the race written nor a real psychology of Man. The essential instinct is for Adventure, not for Good—unless Adventure be conceived as Good. We deliberately (seemingly) do the things that harm us because Pain has its tickle and is an experimental pleasure.

IX

The Conqueror

IF you can lie without blushing, turning pale, lowering a lash, feeling a lump in your throat or moving a muscle that would not move if you told the truth you have conquered life.

X

Career of an Idea

INTO the mind of a Montaigne, an Amiel, an Anatole France an Idea stalks. It splits into a thousand particles and each particle becomes a nucleus for other ideas, conjuring up a thousand opposed and irrelevant connotations, ending in a carnival, a mad charivari, a Mardi Gras procession. The Idea of the active, practical man retains its unity from first to last, and often passes directly into action, travels at least toward its definite, predestined end. The first minds have the glory of a comet about them; the second are as sure and as methodical as moons. It is the difference between the mind that has become infinitized and the mind that has become finitized—Hamlet and Sancho Panza.

XI

Sabbath Reverie

SUNDAY—a hot summer day. Everywhere the People with children. Listlessness, poverty and stupidity. The People!—Necessity's billion billion brats. The faces on the shoulders of the Great Anonymous Trillions. They are like little blasted moons hanging to the skirts of fatigued planets that were once the arcanums of Hope, but are now only dead conundrums of the air—these faces, pitiful, pathetic, dreadful, ugly faces that make me sick at the stomach, those faces of the People! The very poetry of misery. These faces are like dirty doorknobs on old backhouses. Here among the Great Anonymous I read the legend:—"We are Life for Death's sake. Pity us! We are daily litter of Elohim. Pity us! We are stagnant bayous of the Great Gleaming Sea that we have never beheld. Pity us!" The People! Their souls cannot creep, walk, or fly. They are sedentary souls. Their minds have no skylights—only drains. They suffer, but they have not the air of martyrs. They are, but they cannot Be. They never revolt; they only squabble. The

mattress is their Nirvana. Theirs is the eternal search for the vacuum called happiness, and the light from that democracy laps and laves their faces. Their religion is the worship of the bones or the image of some louse-harried, cataleptic saint. O Sun, who art midwife to all Life, what wilt thou do with the People when thou art become the crematory of the side-real spaces? Hast thou fire and flame enough for so much rubbish? Canst thou shape in thy furnaces a lachrimatory large enough for all their tears?

XII

When to Sniff

THE air of superiority loses its force when it is sincere. It should only be worn as a mask in the presence of mediocrity and should never be dropped except in the presence of—superiority.

XIII

Origin of Patriotism

THE intellect and the body may be cosmopolitan; but there is no such thing as emotional cosmopolitanism. The brain may rove everywhere and have as many mistresses as it pleases, or none at all; but the emotions—the instincts—are local, rooted, chauvinistic.

XIV

The Challenge

AND the Lord asked of Satan: "What do men down-there, on Earth, think of me?" And Satan replied, "Some praise you day and night; some are indifferent toward you; some do not believe in you; some disdain you; but there is one who is marching through millions of incarnations to meet you and to demand of you an accounting in the name of the unimaginable myriad of dead. He is a Warrior of Grief, a Rebel to Creation, and he speaks of a duel that must be fought between you and him in the Absolute." And the Lord was silent and paled and was silent.

The Wraith of Pompilius

By John McClure

THERE could be no denying that the moon was a trifle red and that there were other portents, but to assert that Diodorus Carnifex took any note of them would be incorrect. The song that the fat dancing girl had sung to the tambourine was uproariously funny, though he could not remember, word for word, precisely what it concerned, and Diodorus Carnifex in all veracity was occupied more with his memory of her quivering jowls and breasts than with the moon or omens when he thrust his hand into the dark doorway, his long fingers questing for the keyhole.

What they found was a face—a face that felt to the touch like putty.

Yet he saw nothing.

"I trust that my fingers . . ." said Diodorus, his legs suddenly feeling spectral and unsubstantial beneath him.

"The harm is negligible," said a vibrant and melodious voice in Greek.

"My Greek," said Diodorus, "is not of the best, but I understand from your phrasing that you have forgiven me. I trust I did not gouge your eye. If you will step to the side away from the keyhole . . ."

"You may proceed without interruption," said the voice from behind him.

"I am very much obliged to you," said Diodorus Carnifex, feeling more astral than ever, his mind a moiling chaos of fat and quivering cheeks shaking in time with a tambourine, a moon swiftly growing redder above the roofs of Cairo, and an invisible face connected with a voice like that of Theocritus.

"We can go in now," said Diodorus Carnifex, after an agony with his key-

ring, for his fingers were numb and far away. "I mean, if this is where you were going. . . ."

"We will go in," said the invisible visitor. "I know no more where I am going, Diodorus Carnifex, than you do, and the ingress into this chamber will for both of us partake of the nature of adventure."

"I was coming here in the first place," said Diodorus. "I left this chamber only to go to my dinner and—though I will admit that I hovered for three hours at the cabaret because there is a woman that dances there who can laugh with all portions of her anatomy—this was my destination."

"You are very temerarious," said the apparition, "if you maintain for an instant that you know where you are going. But let that pass. This is what you call home and I understand what you allude to, though, for all you say to the contrary, it is very adventure-some to go in or out at a door."

"I know what I am about," said Diodorus Carnifex, "though it may be that aimless and wandering spirits such as you are move always with uncertainty. Going in or out of one's house is as prosaic, I am sure, as the other human functions."

"Ah, the functions!" said the apparition. "How pleasantly I remember them! And what a mystery there is about them which I was so slow in sensing. When you speak of the functions, Diodorus Carnifex, you speak of necromancy."

"After you," said Diodorus Carnifex.

"I am within," said the voice from the other side of the threshold.

"The devil take me," said Diodorus.

"I hope we shall be able to see one another when the candles are lit."

And a piercing homesickness for the jabber of companions at the Sign of the Fishes, and the garish lights and the clatter of mugs came over him.

"I have gone a long journey in seven minutes," said Diodorus under his breath. "And yet this is Cairo, and those are the horse-carts bounding over the cobblestones, and, though I may of a certainty be drunk, this is Diodorus Carnifex in his carnal vestments now and here in this chamber on the verge of striking a light."

"At any rate, nobody could persuade you otherwise," said the apparition.

"It would be quite useless to argue the question," said Diodorus, deeply chagrined at the transparency of his conceptions.

He lit the candles, one by one, round the room.

The shadowy figure of his guest appeared reclined on the couch before the great square window through which Diodorus beheld as in a fever the roofs of Cairo and the great moon, fast turning russet. The apparition, Diodorus realized regretfully, lacked distinction: a man of forty, one would hazard, and smugger than handsome. Diodorus Carnifex seated himself upon the opposite couch.

"And who is it you were?" he ventured, eyeing his visitor uneasily.

"I was mistaken for a philosopher named Pompilius," said the apparition. "I considered myself in that capacity and was so accepted by the world. But who-the-devil I was or who-the-devil I am—those are difficult questions."

"If you were Pompilius, you were Pompilius," said Diodorus. "I will lay you twenty piastres, your creditors could always identify you."

"Those coincidences were odd, certainly," said the apparition, "and almost they convinced me. But these points are of little importance. I seemed, at any rate, to be a philosopher who answered under all normal circumstances to the name of Pompilius as a dog will answer to Fido, and I wrote

a few books expounding the world very absurdly."

"I have not read much," said Diodorus Carnifex awkwardly.

"You would not be at all likely to have encountered my scrolls," said the apparition. "They are lost quite thoroughly and the only copies that have weathered the two centuries since I caught cold will be burned with the Alexandrian library. Anyhow, as I remember them now, those voluminous works were very tall nonsense."

"And what was your dogma?" said Diodorus.

"I occupied myself for several thousand pages," said the apparition, "in a precise elucidation of our destination. And when one is, after all, not going anywhere, Diodorus Carnifex, such a labor is rather ridiculous."

"The writing of any book," said Diodorus, "is difficult to justify. I find pleasure in reading, but, after all, not so total a pleasure as I find in fishing, gambling or wenching."

"You have not then written a volume yourself?" said the apparition. "It is very unusual in Cairo."

"I have made a study of Greek," said Diodorus Carnifex, "so that before I die I can concoct a suitable epitaph. And I have planned a volume on the philosophy of chance with particular application to cubes of dice. But these productions have as yet scarcely germinated."

"And these works, I dare say, you would consider worth-while?" said the apparition.

"The last would at any rate have a practical value," said Diodorus Carnifex.

"You are still ass enough then, Diodorus Carnifex," said the apparition, "to think that, whatever you are about, you are going somewhere?"

"We are going somewhere certainly," said Diodorus. "Even when we sit still, Pompilius, we are going somewhere. Time advances, and the most motionless rump is en route."

"One can be en route, in a way of speaking, and yet have no destination,"

said the apparition of Pompilius. "I agree with you that all creatures are furiously in progress, and the comets are racing as impetuously as any. But I have been disembodied for a period of ten of your lives and have watched a great deal of this comedy. I was and am dead, Diodorus Carnifex. And I, too, thought I was going somewhere. Yet here I am. And is it likely, do you believe for an instant, that this was my destination—this square room of yours with its guttering candles, rushes laid over the floor, and a tawny moon peering in at the window over the roofs of Cairo?"

"Since you are here," said Diodorus Carnifex, "and here you are, certainly, I cannot say that it was not."

"That I have stopped here for an instant in time, I admit," said the wraith of Pompilius, "but we were speaking of terminals."

"Terminals do not concern me," said Diodorus Carnifex, "for, as I have said, until time ends we are merely en route. I know very well what I am about and, though I may to a certain extent pity a vague and drifting spirit like you, your problems do not affect me."

"Nevertheless," said the apparition, "you do not, as a matter of fact, know where you are going, what you are doing, nor why you are engaged as you are. You are as ignorant as I am, Diodorus Carnifex. And that is a weighty assertion, for if I had my way, Pompilius, who is forgotten, would be proverbial for an ass."

"We all deserve that honor," said Diodorus Carnifex.

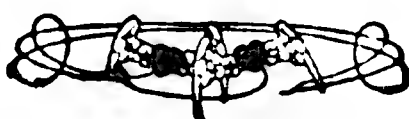
"I will go now," said the apparition of Pompilius. "I know I am entirely superfluous. The fat girl is outside."

"What! Is she here already?" cried Diodorus Carnifex.

"Listening at the keyhole," said the wraith of Pompilius. "I will go out at the window."

"Farewell," said Diodorus, yawning as a splotch of gray mist drifted across the white face of the moon.

For it was now the large marble globe of voluptuous summer that floated above the silver roofs and there was no portent to be noted anywhere except a tapping at the door and a trill of laughter as Diodorus Carnifex hurried about the chamber, blowing out the candles.



HOW can a man like women and yet refrain from marrying? Well, how can a man like flowers and yet not be a gardener?



SALOME was the first lady to understand the connection between gauze and effect.



A MAN'S greatest fault is overconfidence. A woman's, overweight.



Four More Little Stories

By Luigi Lucatelli

(Translated by Morris Bishop)

I

Pierino

CARLUCCIO had sat down at the table, dipped his pen in the ink, laid it down, blown his nose, kicked the cat and daubed his fingers with ink. Having thus fulfilled the duties of an ill-bred boy, he read the subject set for his composition:

"Pierino is the consolation of his parents. Describe this good boy and his praiseworthy qualities."

It will be seen that the theme had little charm for him, for, after mature reflection, he uttered this pedagogico-moral judgment:

"Hope the teacher croaks!"

Then he had an idea.

"Mama!" he cried, "will you buy me that automobile you can wind up?"

His mama did not even hear him; she was standing in front of her mirror, retouching her brows with an eyebrow pencil, and at the same time carrying on a brisk discussion with her legitimate consort, who was washing his gloves with benzine.

"I haven't paid the bill," cried the signora, "because you're a loafer and the money you make, when you do make any, you throw away on other women!"

"Carolina," replied her spouse, "I have told you plenty of times not to stick your nose into my business, just as I don't interfere in yours; if you don't look out there'll be trouble!"

"Pierino," wrote Carluccio, "rises in the morning, washes himself, brushes his hair—"

"So you think it's my business to wear myself out keeping the family going! I'm sick of it, do you get that?"

One of these days I'll get out of here bag and baggage and leave you in the soup, you lazy bum!"

"Carolina, be careful what you say; otherwise we'll have the same thing as last week over again. You know I'm not a joker! Just think of that rattan cane! It's a pretty good thing for—"

"He says his prayers—" wrote Carluccio.

"Try it," shrieked his wife, "and I'll go to the window and yell, and bring all the neighbors here! Oh yes, I'll do it all right! After ten years of a dog's life like this! After giving you everything!"

"Ha, ha!" laughed her consort ironically. "You mean the four pennies of dowry you brought me, which you blew in right away on dresses!"

"Oh, I like that! If I'd waited for you to buy me any dresses I'd be a fine sight!"

"Who bought them then—the baron?"

"Whoever I please bought them!"

"Oh, shut up, you skunk!"

"Shut up yourself, you brute!"

Carluccio had interrupted his work and was listening with profound interest, watching for the moment when the battle would begin, in order to dodge under the table in time.

However, matters were accommodated, because the husband had just curled his moustaches with a hot iron and arranged his hair elaborately, and he did not wish to get mussed up. But he took the dish of benzine and the gloves and retired to the next room. Then Carluccio thought the moment opportune to advance his proposal a second time.

"Mama!" he repeated, "will you buy me that automobile you can wind up?"

"Yes, a fat chance, after those naughty words you said yesterday to Father Liborio in Sunday School!"

"But he said naughty words, too."

"Oh, go to the devil!" shrilled the signora, who had distractedly blackened a pimple.

"All right then, if you don't buy me the automobile I'll tell the baron what I saw in the parlor, when the lieutenant—"

"Cut that out!" menaced the signora in a low voice, "You just try it!"

"Then buy me the automobile!"

"All right, I'll buy it, but from now on you'll get out of the way and what you'll see is nothing!"

"Gonna have an auto, gonna have an auto!" chanted Carluccio jumping up and down in his chair. He then took up the pen and wrote:

"He says his prayers, reviews his lessons, and asks his dear parents for their holy blessing—"

II

How Asmodeo Ribelli Did Not Make His Fortune

WHEN the usher announced Asmodeo Ribelli the minister adjusted the *pince-nez* on his nose and assumed an astute diplomatic air. The reason was that for two weeks Asmodeo Ribelli had been turning the city upside down. No one could tell why this figure, unknown two weeks before, should have grown to giant size in the midst of the tumult; from a mere bakers' strike he had produced two other strikes, threatening their extension to all the Labor Unions and putting in jeopardy the very life of the Ministry.

The police reports spoke of his "singular ascendance" over the masses and of his "demagogic eloquence." So when the Minister learned by devious channels that the man might be disposed to parley, he invited him enthusiastically. In the half-open portfolio His Excellency had already prepared a warrant with the note in pencil: "Fifty thousand lire for signor Asmodeo."

Asmodeo entered. His hair was a

little too long, his nose was short and upturned, his cravat was a wild and flaming red. The Minister, noting the red cravat, murmured, "He's a little *démodé*; we'll make it forty thousand."

The two looked at each other for a moment; each put on the most artful smile he possessed, but Asmodeo made the mistake of trying that leonine toss of the head which had been the sensation of the Labor Congress. Then he made a grammatical error which cost him five thousand lire.

"Sir," he began in a fine baritone voice, "Europe is looking at you and I!"

The Minister's smile became colder.

"It is true," he replied with delicate irony, "that Europe is looking at you and me, and just for that reason I appeal to your democratic faith, in order that the unhappy state of affairs which you have created may cease. Let us study together, if you think well of it, the means, the forms, the just rewards" (he emphasized the word) "which can be offered." (If he smiles I won't give him a penny.)

Asmodeo smiled.

"Now listen to me," said Asmodeo. "I want you to understand the situation. If I withdraw from the struggle the whole movement will stop; but my political career is finished!"

"Does he want a seat in Parliament?" said the Minister to himself.

"Finished!" repeated Asmodeo. "And I also compromise my future as a workman, because no employer will take me on. I will put my cards on the table! If there is in the Government offices a good, secure job, even though modest—"

The Minister turned to ice.

"I do not understand," he said, "your huckster's language. We can only come together upon a common ground of political ideals. I see that we have nothing to say to each other. You may go."

He rang the bell.

"But signore!" cried Asmodeo, instinctively repeating his leonine toss of the head.

"The State," said the Minister

severely, "consults the conscience of its citizens; if strong enough, it guides that conscience; but it does not purchase it. Go."

Asmodeo made his exist, staggering.

"The swine!" muttered the Minister when he was alone. He lit a cigarette. His glance fell upon the warrant for fifty thousand lire.

"It will do for Fifine," he murmured, and put it in his pocket.

III

Sentiment

IN none of the thousands of houses which are rented to the citizens of Rome is the cult of Sentiment so active as in the Panzettoni home. Sentiment oozes from the walls and blooms there like a mould of the spirit. To the right, you see the oleograph of Juliet and the inevitable Romeo, near by is Santuzza at the feet of Turiddu, in front is Friar Christopher blessing the weeping Lucia, and behind your back Manrico holds the forlorn gipsy maid asleep on his knees. One has the impression that brimming tears streak the mirrors of the side-board and drip from the chandeliers.

The plumes of reeds in the terracotta vases on the table bend over like weeping willows, and the doorbell rings with a sweet, submissive *ding-ding* like the sobbing of a child in pain.

Signor Panzettoni is an usher in a Ministry, and on the side he discounts bills at excessive rates of interest; the signora sells frocks to a dubious clientèle on the instalment plan at very considerable profit. Both are large and squarely built, jovial, unscrupulous, and sentimental. Their stock has flowered in the shape of signorina Clelia, who is too fat for her twenty-five years, and has the family's square jaw, a flattish nose, and hair which appears to be always soaked in oil. She keeps the household accounts, guards implacably the maid's morals, plays the piano and sings.

On Sunday, after dinner, which is vast and well irrigated with wine, the family indulges in an orgy of tears.

The druggist from the first floor comes up with his wife, and a young man who seems very likely to get a job and marry signorina Clelia accompanies that damsel on the piano.

The young man also recites poetry by Lorenzo Stecchetti. He recites very well. When he says: "My head is nigh to breaking, I am ill!" he scratches his narrow brow and makes a terrible face, causing the pomaded points of his moustaches to stand out at surprising angles.

Then the signorina sings: "Mother dear, you know, you know," or else, "O'er my sleeping love I bend, But her sleep will have no end." And when she reaches the climax: "Oh, cursed Grief which killed not me!" she emits a frightful shriek, as if she were parting simultaneously with a tooth, roots and all, and all the illusions of youth.

Then every abdomen may be seen to tremble with emotion, and a rain of tears drips into the coffee-cups and liqueur glasses which are being passed about. A deep beatitude of woe is in the air, with the fat odor of meat and the aroma of coffee; there is a mood of tears, of weeping willows, of moonlight, of heart-break mingled with the quiet bliss of the digestive ferments.

One day signor Panzettoni let himself go to such an extent that he sang in a thin voice: "There useter be a light in yer winder for me; Why don'tcha light up no more?" and another time the signora demanded in a terrible outburst: "Alas, why do you come to me with tales of passion in your eyes?" during the whole evening she looked fixedly at the druggist, who noticed nothing on account of his extreme myopia.

One Sunday, just at this time of day, a client came to ask for an extension. He was a petty employee buried in an overcoat too large for him; he had a two-colored moustache above a melancholy mouth from which issued the breath of a sickly and underfed organism. He waited for an hour in the vestibule, oppressed by the odor of foods he had not tasted for years and

by the recollection of the cold hearth in his own home.

Finally the signora came to speak with him; she refused him hastily and coldly, for she heard her daughter's *romanza* unfolding in the next room and she wanted to be back in time for the shriek.

The applicant departed, more wretched, more desperate than before; he felt as if he were carrying the physical weight of his creditors on his shoulders. The maid afterward asserted that he had showed a lack of respect for the family by spitting blood on the stairs.

The signora returned to the parlor; it was just the right moment; the shriek struck her full on, from breast to stomach, and she had a delicious thrill, while the accustomed tears, domesticated and punctual as an old servant, trickled slowly down her matronly double chin.

IV

Diogenes

THE average mortal, on surveying his footwear and finding it in most lamentable state, would think sadly of the immortality of the soul and the brief hey-day of the rose, profound and melancholy reflections to which man abandons himself in his moments of abject misery. For there is nothing which brings the spirit of man so near to the lofty realms of Poesy as broken shoes.

The hero of this brief sketch, on the contrary, upon perceiving his fissured boots merely smiled with deepest irony and became a cynic.

He did not hide his shoes; far from it, he displayed them brazenly and spoke ill of Dante Alighieri. These two manifestations, *i. e.*, the parading of the torn boots and the belittling of the Divine Comedy, gave him a complete and consistent character; he was promoted to the class of Diogenes, by his own order and decree.

In his manner of contemplating his fellow-tenants of the earth's crust there was something more than simple irony;

there was a sort of jesting, uneasy contempt. Through the clefts in his venerable footgear had penetrated a divine arrogance, by the aid of which he looked the world over calmly from top to bottom and from bottom to top; preferably from bottom to top, as thus one views better the world's bandy legs. He could always find a pregnant sentence to sum up his unmeasured contempt for any man living, at the same time giving the impression that he had judged the man's lifework in secret and stupendous meditation, to the contemplation of which he did not admit the profane.

In his heart he was convinced that he had a brutally incisive turn of phrase. Sometimes as he cast himself upon a *café divan* he had the sensation of lying at his ease on top of all the glories of mankind, which he could hear snapping under him like a heap of dead twigs.

He reached a dizzy stage of self-esteem, though omitting the formality of producing a masterpiece; this indeed he would never have done, as he scorned to justify his own superiority in the face of the mob of imbeciles who passed under the shining beams of his smile.

Anyone else, after committing an evil deed, would have said to himself with some trepidation: "Dear me! I'm afraid I'm rather a scoundrell!" But this man would gaze about him, proud and confident, and say: "I'm a rotter! Yes, sir, I am a *rotter!*"

He was heard to pronounce the following discourse:

"Today I ate by the expenditure of a lire which I obtained by selling a book I had borrowed from a friend. But things won't go in this way; I will find a rich girl to love me and I'll put on my visiting card: 'So-and-so, White Slaves.' That will at least be better than painting the agricultural proletariat of the Abruzzo, like Micchetti, or putting toothache into poetry, like Pascoli."

He lolled upon the divan, extending one foot so that a passing lady should see his gaping shoe.

Transition

By Joseph Upper

I

HE had always protested that he had gypsy blood. She knew the roving spirit to be strong in him, and he had warned her more than once against putting faith in his constancy. She knew, of course, that if he could not be faithful to place or responsibility he could not keep faith with men and women; least of all with women, who represented to him only slightly varying manifestations of an eternal phenomenon, like the ever-changing colors of the sky or the succeeding daily aspects of the sun.

She knew this, and the words of the letter she was writing grinned up at her maliciously from the white paper. Several times she let the pen fall from her fingers and roll across the still unused portion of the white sheet, while she put her hands to her eyes to shut out the black and white mockery of her plea. It was futile. With each added line she sensed its absurd futility. But she always took up her pen once more and wrote on. She must try to make him understand. She must find words into which she could pour her great longing, her mad earnestness. She must show him her soul. If he could once see *that*, if he could once know the really spiritual validity of her claim upon him. . . .

She wrote on. The light from her window threw its cheery smile across the valley in the direction of the State road where an occasional automobile scurried past sleepy Warburton in a race with an approaching storm. A gust of wind rattled the branches of the tall elm tree outside the window

and scattered clouds of dust up and down Valley Lane. Couples returning from a movie in Warburton to the Nurses' Home on the State Hospital grounds bent their heads before the intermittent blasts and drew closer together.

"That's where Miss Edgelow lives," observed a pupil nurse to her companion who was in charge of one of the men's wards. "She's Dr. Kenyon's stenographer. Awfully upstage. She married a fellow who worked at the hospital, and he ran away from her in less than six months. I understand that she tells how he has a better position somewhere else and that she's going to him before very long, but take it from me, she's one merry liar and she knows it. She'll never see him again. Believe me, that's about the way you'd do if I married you. Only if *I* marry you, you won't. No man'll ever put anything like that over on *me*."

"Aw, who's talking about marryin'? Come on and hurry up or we'll both get wet. That storm ain't goin' to wait all night."

The wind ran about the circle of Warburton's hills and chased a merry troupe of raindrops into the town.

II

SYLVIA EDGELOW's pen still pleaded with her truant husband. Why wouldn't he let her come to him? She would leave Warburton. She was not especially attached to the place. She could come where he was, or he could leave there and they would go out into a new world together. She had no fear of such a venture. Assured of his love,

she could face any situation, could confidently dispose of all threatening difficulties. She needed only that to strengthen her. Only let them be together, and everything else would work out all right, all other considerations would take care of themselves.

Something in the depths of the woman's thought released itself and poured out its inhibited expression onto the white paper in front of her. The pen glided almost automatically across sheet after sheet. Outside in the darkness long pent-up natural energies suddenly broke forth in hysterical frenzy. The rain beat upon the windows of the little house like the agonized hands of frustrated lovers. Screams of demoniac laughter ran with the wind.

Sylvia was reminded of some of the women patients at the hospital. On still nights when she was returning from a walk to the village she would occasionally hear them screaming in the wards. They were always more excitable at night. She thought she understood why. It was the time that the suppressed longing for the romance of life asserted itself. Perhaps there wasn't so much difference between them and her. The other women, with little force of resistance and nothing better to do, screamed; *she* filled page after page of white notepaper with erotic messages to her absent husband. She wondered how many of them had once had absent husbands and written to them. Husbands or lovers. The husband feature made comparatively little difference. Perhaps they had written much in the vein that she was writing now. What then? Had they written to no purpose?

She gazed fixedly at her pen. Somehow it did not seem possible that its effort could be wasted. Was it true that *he* would not yield to this inky persuasion? Remembering his irresponsibility, she emitted a long, bitter laugh which hunted out weird echoes in the silent room. Her realization of the probable futility of her task returned and a fearful numbness seized her fingers. The pen fell from them and the woman sat staring moodily at

the passionate sentences she had written.

If she were forced at last into a recognition of defeat, what should she do? The prospect of interminable days and nights of loneliness spread itself before her. If he had indeed gone out of her life forever, what then? She took up the pen once more. He *must* heed her demands. Some supreme effort of her thought must call him back to her side, must unite them again. She would put failure out of her mind.

Resolutely displacing emotion with argument and reason, she finished the letter.

III

THE elemental fury outside the little house drew her several times to the windows alive with innumerable arteries of glistening rain. The night seemed to be expressive of her own turbulent passion, and the hoarse wind crying down Valley Lane recalled some of the tempestuous phrases in the letter she had lately written. Her emotions had broken loose in the letter like the storm in Valley Lane, and its echo screamed in her memory with a violence equal to that of the elements outside.

Suddenly she felt stifled by the confines of the little house. She wanted to run with the storm, to proclaim her kinship with the emotional abandon of the rain-maddened night.

The letter. She must mail it. The nearest box was in the office of the hospital. It would go out early in the morning. She turned away from the window and went eagerly into the hall to equip herself for a battle with the rain. When she was ready, she came back into the quiet room to get the letter. As she turned out the light above the table where she had been writing, the beat of the rain on the darkened window was like the passionate revolt in the heart of an unloved woman. Her fingers closed convulsively over the letter as she ran downstairs and out into the understanding night.

IV

SYLVIA EDGELOW often wondered why her husband had married *her*. She

knew, when she reasoned the matter out clearly, without emotion, that he had known and loved many women before he met her and that several of those women were more attractive than she. But he had apparently not cared enough for any of them to ask them to marry him, and the fact that he had never suggested to her any other arrangement or relationship than marriage argued, she thought, for the possession of something which those women had lacked.

It was a reflection calculated to console her in her loneliness, for certainly marriage had not brought to her any other perceptible advantage. It had not freed her economically. She had not expected that it would. He didn't make enough for that, wasn't equipped mentally, or temperamentally perhaps, to make enough. It had simply legitimized their romance, the first romance that had come into her life. But it had lifted her at once to a plane above the other women he had known, had raised her romance with him above the level of any of his previous romances. Something in her had called forth a higher regard than he had accorded any woman before, a protective regard. He had married her, she felt sure, not because it was something that he eagerly wanted to do on his own account, but because it was something that he wanted to do for her. He had known that it would make it easier for her when he left—and it had, of course.

She wondered how he had left the other women. What were they like? Just how did she differ from them that he had voluntarily offered her what he would have refused to yield the others? Certainly she possessed something which they had not. Was it something spiritual that had commanded an attitude approaching reverence? She smiled, trying to picture him as reverent. Still, reverence was sometimes just a form of fear. Had he been afraid to treat her like the others? Was it something which he had not had the courage to ignore? Or was it merely something intellectual, something which impressed him by contrast with her predecessors and made him instinctively recognize in

her a higher value which he must match with a higher price? Had none of the other women possessed a brain? Were they all shallow, mere alluring flesh-pots?

Whatever the thing was it had made their romance possible. It had married them. She realized somehow that there would have been no romance otherwise. She simply would have loitered about the threshold of a house of mystery, but never would have dared to enter unless someone with the dress and manners of convention invited her in. And someone had. And now she was here—but where was he? Had he deserted her as he had the other women? Were a wedding ring and a marriage certificate all that remained as souvenirs of her visit? Finer souvenirs than *they* had doubtless, but poor at that—useless dust catchers.

And romance? What if he never returned, if the letter she clutched in her hand was, after all, but so many words thrown to the ruthless wind? Could she find romance still? Would she be more courageous now? Stories about some of the doctors at the hospital recurred to her. Someone had said they were much like army officers and coupled the observation with tales of life at an army post. Would there be anything else for her if the letter she had written should prove to be no more than words on paper? Was the little romance that she had known destined to be all that she should ever know?

Her gloved fingers caressed the letter in the pocket of her raincoat. Would it fail in its errand? Its passionate phrases had been written to the accompaniment of lashing rain and wailing wind, but tomorrow the sun might shine in Valley Lane and all Warburton smile contentedly under a blue sky. What state of mind would he be in when the letter reached him? Its eager passion might mean no more to him than the memory of tonight's storm would to her a week hence. She must despair, in that case, of bringing him back to her, of ever seeing him again perhaps. And then—?

Where Valley Lane joined the Ave-

nue the wind loosed its vindictive fury on all unfortunate pedestrians. Sylvia Edgelow bent before its violent onrush half wishing that she had known enough to remain at home, yet conscious of a certain joy in this battle with primitive forces. The energy that had penned pulsating messages to her inconstant husband found another outlet in contending with this angry night of cruel wind and rain. She turned off from the Avenue and plunged defiantly into the hospital grounds.

As if in answer to her attitude, the storm hurled a strong reinforcement of wind and rain against the aged trees that congregated on the grounds of the State Hospital. Sylvia fought her way stubbornly in the face of this fresh assault and laughed with the joy of battle when she paused for rest close to the trunk of a veteran oak to let the angry gusts of wind-driven rain sweep by on each side of her. But when she darted on again to renew her struggle for the contested right of way, the infuriated elements hastened to their vengeance. An instant's hard impact with a heavy, unseen object, followed by a sharp pain through her head and a sudden wave of dizziness, was all that told her she should have been wary of falling limbs. In the next moment she was one with the oblivious night.

V

MOTION. . . .

The first tremor of returning consciousness brought to Sylvia Edgelow only the faint realization that she was moving through space. By what means, toward what, and why, she could not tell. Gradually there were associated with this realization certain fragmentary recollections. The wind whistling past her was full of strange familiarity. Her cheek rested on something smooth and cool. It was wet, too. There was a faint odor of rubber. Where was she, then? Not in bed, not dreaming, not in a train. An automobile perhaps. But why an automobile? Where *had* she been? She moved ever so slightly and was instantly aware of pressure,

gentle, protective pressure. Someone must be holding her. But who? Why? Where had she been before—? That howling wind and—yes, a pain in her head. A letter. She had been going to mail a letter. She opened her eyes. They met the solicitous gaze of a stranger. There was no sign of a car. The man was walking and carrying her in his arms. She struggled slightly.

"Lie still, please. We'll be there in just a moment."

The voice had quiet authority in it. She relaxed and lay still. He had said that they would be there in a moment. Where was "there"? Who was he? Where had he found her, and where were they going? She opened her eyes again ever so cautiously and sought to examine the man's face, but the darkness made such an undertaking futile and she was forced to content herself with the assurance that he appeared to be a gentleman and that he was someone whom she had not seen before at the hospital. After that she seemed to lose consciousness again, or at least to become wearily indifferent to the whole situation, and it was only when a sudden effulgence of light broke through the darkness around them that she once more opened her eyes. Instantly she recognized the familiar hallway of one of the hospital centers. Her good samaritan must be connected with the institution, after all. But perhaps not. He may have just brought her here as the nearest place of shelter.

When he set her down gently in a chair she opened her eyes and smiled at him.

"Stay quietly where you are," he said. "I'll be with you again in a minute."

And he disappeared from the room before Sylvia had a decent opportunity to discover what he looked like.

Probably he had gone for restoratives, or assistance. She was almost sure that she did not need either. He had blue eyes and a nice chin, anyway. Which of the institution's several offices was she in? Her eyes took inventory of the articles on the desk near her. Then she laughed amusedly as she realized that her rescuer had brought her to

exactly the place which she herself had started for when— What *had* happened to her, anyway?

VI

HE returned in a few minutes without his hat or raincoat and carrying a glass which he presented to the curious Sylvia.

"Drink this," he said with as quiet authority as she might have expected of Dr. Kenyon. She obeyed him instantly, wondering who he was and how he presumed to make himself so much at home in her office. Where had he got the stuff, and what had he done with his hat and coat?

"You act for all the world like a doctor," she observed, handing him the empty glass.

"Um," he grunted doubtfully. "If we knew each other, I should be inclined to think you were making fun of me. I *am* a doctor, you see."

"Really? I thought I knew all the doctors here."

"You probably do," he answered, "but now you'll have to add me to the list. I just came this afternoon. I'm the new interne in this group."

"Not Dr. Kenyon's expected assistant?"

"Yes. You know Dr. Kenyon, too?"

"Why, yes. You see, I'm his stenographer. This is my desk. I was coming over here to mail a letter when— Where did you find me, anyway? What happened?"

"A letter!" The new interne looked severely professional. "My dear young lady, you don't mean to tell me that you came out in this storm just to mail a letter!"

He checked himself, conscious of a foolish pedagogical note in his voice, and continued in a more matter-of-fact tone:

"What happened was, I judge, that you were slightly stunned by the falling limb of one of those large trees this side of the road. I could only have been a little way behind you, for I heard the cracking of the limb just

before I discovered you lying on the ground. It must have been a very important letter that impelled you to come out in this hurricane."

"It was. I wanted it to go out on the first mail. It—"

Sylvia stopped. She had been on the point of saying that it was to her husband, but something restrained her. There was no reason why she shouldn't tell this man that she was married. He would be certain to hear of it before long anyway. Dr. Kenyon knew of it, and most of the other people at the hospital. Still, he didn't need to know about the letter. She got up and walked to the window.

"I think the wind will soon die down," she said.

The interne looked at her quizzically. He was persuaded that something interesting must pertain to this girl whom he had discovered under such romantic circumstances. So she belonged to this group, was the stenographer here. Tomorrow she would be formally introduced to him as one of his subordinates. He could dictate to her. He would see and talk with her daily. She would be one of the familiar figures in the new life he was just entering. He followed her to the window.

"It's still raining pretty hard. You'd better take that wet coat off and wait a while. I'll go back with you when it let up. Whereabouts do you live, anyway?"

"Over in Valley Lane. That doesn't mean anything to you, of course, if you've just come to the hospital. It's not far beyond the grounds on the other side of the State road."

"I see." But what the doctor really saw was the graceful line of the girl's figure as she slipped out of the raincoat. He reached for the garment mechanically. Before she surrendered it, she felt in the pocket to see if any accident had befallen the adventure-making letter. It was still there. When the doctor left the office again, she would transfer it to the mail-box.

"Better sit there near the radiator. No reason why you should take cold,

even if you do have to scour the country on rainy nights like a rural mail carrier." He carried the wet coat into the hall and hung it up.

The new interne in the group. Tomorrow Dr. Kenyon would introduce him to her. "Miss Edgelow, this is Dr. Smith." She wondered what his real name was. "He is to be with us now and will assume the duties of Dr. Wentworth. You will find Miss Edgelow an efficient stenographer, Doctor, and she will acquaint you with any details in connection with the office that you may want to know. She has been with us a number of years and is perfectly familiar with our methods here." Then she would see him every day and write case notes for him, and help him answer the hypocritical inquiries of Susan Jones' relatives with still more hypocritical assurances of his interest in her welfare; and so he would become a part of the daily life of Group C. It would not be very long before he would begin to study for promotion examinations. All the internes did. And he might pass them and become an assistant physician. And then— One of the assistants in Group B had married his stenographer. The interne wasn't married. She was sure of that. None of the internes ever was. None of them could afford it.

The doctor's reappearance cut into her speculations.

"I suppose we shall meet tomorrow under rather more conventional circumstances. My name is Harcourt."

"I am glad to know you, Dr. Harcourt. I am Sylvia Edgelow. I anticipate the pleasure of writing all your case notes for you."

To the tune of inconsequential chatter Sylvia began sizing up this new figure in the hospital's narrow picture. He was young, unmarried, and had a profession. Not a full-fledged profession, of course, but perhaps the foundation for one. And he was good looking. Not handsome, not striking, but well—acceptable. She had met him under favorable conditions. Their encounter had in it a touch of romance,

a suggestion of that fortuitous element which sentimental people called fate. If her husband were indeed lost to her—

She was suddenly aware that a peculiar silence had penetrated the office. It was not because of any lapses in their conversation, for that had not lagged. Harcourt rattled on with pleasurable abandon, happy for the moment at having someone to talk to in this strange place. Sylvia was the first person he had met at the institution on a social basis. She in turn had been gaily voluble. Tomorrow, and for at least some time after, their relations would have to be clogged with a certain official dignity, and she was glad of the advantage afforded by this preliminary freedom. But the strange silence had crept into the room even while they talked. It was as though it came from outside. At last its import reached her. The storm was over. The passionate fury of rain and wind that had swept her into this man's arms now felt that its usefulness was at an end. Sylvia got up.

"I think the storm has abated, Doctor. If you really want to see Valley Lane after a downpour, you may take me home."

When the doctor brought her her coat, she felt in the pocket again for the letter.

"I'll be with you in just a minute, Miss Edgelow. I left my coat and hat upstairs."

Sylvia drew out the letter as soon as she heard the doctor's feet on the staircase, and crossed the room swiftly to the mail-box. The messenger would get the letter early in the morning and it would go out with the first mail. Her husband would have it by the evening of the next day. Would he answer, and how? Something of the old longing swept over her as she held the letter over the slit in the box. After all, she had put into it the best expression of her desire, her highest hope for happiness. And yet, if it failed— She did not feel somehow as she had before. There was no other man like the one to whom she had written. That was

true. But . . . there were . . . other men. Only tonight one of them had come into her life. He had carried her in his arms, and tomorrow they would be working together in the same office.

The sound of Dr. Harcourt's returning step on the staircase cut short her wandering thoughts. She released her hold on the passionate letter. It made a sharp sound when it struck the bottom of the box. The doctor was coming downstairs to take her home. Her husband. Other men. . . .

Could it be that, after all, it was not any particular one—that *the* one didn't matter so much as long as there *was* one? Had all the fervor of her letter meant just that? Then she could have

written it quite as readily to any other man. It was *a* man she wanted, and not. . . . *The* man was only a circumstantial accident.

"All ready, Miss Edgelow. Now if you'll show me where this Valley Lane is— Oh, did you mail that important letter of yours?"

"Yes." The doctor was holding the door open for her. "I mailed it." She stepped out onto the porch of the Center, and the wet, earthy smell sprang up from in front of the building to greet them.

"But I don't know," she concluded as the doctor took her arm to pilot her down the wet steps, "whether it was as—as important as I thought."



Her Heart Was Curiously Wrought

By Maxwell Anderson

HER heart was curiously wrought
In many fires, with many dyes,
Inlaid with many a symbol'd truth,
Crusted with flashing lies.

He saw it molten in the flame,
Fused for the final artistry;
But he withheld his bungling hands
And drew the coals of memory,

Saying, Not skill but luck alone
Has touched with fleeting miracle
This loveliness for all men born,
And should I darken it or dull,

I were not easily forgiven
Of man or boy among the trade.
And so he left it to be marred
By others who were not afraid.



The Collector

By Ben Ray Redman

I HAVE collected women as other men
Collect old china, or rare books,
Pictures or rugs or tapestries;
But with some differences,
Implicit in my choice.

Old prints get on together well;
And pictures never fight
If they are wisely hung.
But women? No accumulation there.

And there's another difference, too:
Old china doesn't mock at age,
And rugs are soft beneath
The slippered feet of spent senility;
And books,—even when eyes are bleared,
There's still the clasp of hands.

But the last woman flies, some time;
And when she does, why that's the end,
The end of all the brave collection.
For women leave so little of themselves behind:
A drifting perfume, or the glint of hair;
The curious gesture of slim fingers.
But these commingle:
Scent is mixed with scent,
And fingers intertwine with alien fingers,
And sunseen eyes waver, from brown to blue.

I have collected women as other men
Collect old china, or rare books,
Pictures or rugs or tapestries.
I look around me and the room
Is singularly bare.



The Professor of Suicide

By Eugene M. Pharo

I

LEIGH CROWE was never as black as he was painted. Few realized that his taciturnity and aloofness from people were due to nothing so much as his effort to put himself, mentally, into their places.

Perhaps he should have been a writer, but he was not, except in a private and quite unpublished way. He proved too suggestible when his father insisted he go into architecture and try to carry on the name for such work that the family had built up during the past three generations.

He was unusually tall—six feet, three inches—but was not built to scale. His head, in particular, was small in comparison with the rest of him. It was thin and long. His eyes, though, burned blackly with a suppressed fire that hinted an inner force quite in keeping with his corporeal extent.

My curiosity about him was always overpowering, though I never let it become too evident. It would have frosted the confidences I believe Crowe made to me more than to any man. He had little to do with women.

He called me tough-minded, after William James. He could unload on me things that seemed to him hardly bearable. A strange thing was, these unloadings hardly ever had to do with events that need, by any conceivable destiny, have affected him.

Suicides seemed to hold an unescapable interest for him. I believe he subscribed to a newspaper clipping bureau for the sole purpose of keeping in touch with the latest forms of taking one's life, though he seemed usually more

interested in the reasons than in the methods of a man's taking himself off.

His interest in them was purely academic. He had everything a man could want in the way of worldly comfort and resource. It is true that he lived alone, but he would have designated that good fortune, rather than otherwise. He said a man could not live in a crowd, or with others privileged to crowd in on him. Suicides were really his hobby. He collected them the way another might collect stamps, or books.

Eventually, I think, they began to pall on him. The monotony of them was impressive. There were few variations in the reasons and ways of suicides. He would come to me with an unhealthy sort of ardor when he struck a killing that lifted itself above the ordinary by ever so little. Sometimes the divergence was puerile.

"Here's a boy . . . a mere boy of twenty-three," he said one day. "He killed himself because, he wrote, 'I've traveled all over the world and seen everything I want to see here. Now I'm going over the line' . . . I wonder if he's a Cook's tourist now," he added jocularly, when I showed my puzzlement at his excitement.

Sometimes I would not see him for a week. Then he would tell me rapidly the suicides that had struck him most forcibly in the course of it.

"Here's something that seems a shame," he would say. "A young fellow out of work, away from home, and he gets hold of fifteen cents for some poison. They pick him up in the street and pump him out at the hospital. In four hours they have him arraigned before a dirty magistrate. Ten days in

jail and the fellow still insists he wants to die. Ha! Ha!" he laughed. Then he would laugh again because I could not see the humor in it.

"But this one's different," he would continue. "It's a tragi-comedy, where the emphasis might have fallen either way."

Then he would tell me of a young wife who is found unconscious in a ferry terminal. By quick action she is relieved of the poison she has taken. She says her husband—newly married, of course—has gone out and told her he is not coming back. With a great deal of reluctance she tells her name and address. When the girl, still faint from poison, is got home, the husband is discovered in a stew because his wife is out somewhere and supper's not ready.

The latter sort of story, that struck me as much funnier than the first, would not make Crowe laugh at all.

He would sit back in the little study of his apartment on Hicks-Dugan Street, surrounded by beautifully bound books on a variety of subjects you would have thought of more interest, and discourse endlessly on his hobby. Sometimes he would go to a particular bookcase and haul out some tome, weighing pounds, and quote to me with impressive earnestness from a pedant's analysis of the subject.

He had a queer museum in his bedroom. There were weapons he had chosen for their fitness for suicide, and there were guns and knives and poisons and outlandish contrivances that had actually been used for the job. A suicide had been found curled up, with a gas tube in his mouth, in the hamper he used for stowing away dirty linen.

It got so, after a while, that if he had tea served at his rooms he would invite one to "drink the hemlock." For the same reason he had a bathtub put into his shower bathroom. So many distinguished philosophers, he explained, had used the bath in which to open their veins. Had he not kept on about his work, as usual, and conducted himself

with the utmost propriety on all occasions, you would have thought he was going crazy.

Occasionally he detected this unspoken suspicion in me. Once he got rather angry about it, and explained with some detail that if he chose suicide for his special department of knowledge, there was no reason he should not display as much interest as another man might display in old china. . . .

There was a period in which the monotony and unimaginativeness of current suicides especially bored and disgusted him.

"Why can't persons make something worth while of their going?" he said to me. "It's their final gesture and deserves a little attention. So many do it as though they were buying car tickets, or going down cellar to look at the furnace.

"If I ever killed myself," he said, "I'd leave something that would show pretty plainly, I tell you, why I wouldn't stay on in the rotten old world. I'd have no magistrates shrugging over my pumped-out belly and getting off smart little platitudes.

"When you pay your life for a thing, old man," he continued, stabbing me with a tense forefinger, "you don't want to be short-weighted in what you're getting for it. A man has as good a chance to become famous at committing suicide, if he does it perfectly, as he has by living a great and virtuous life filled with compromise."

"I guess you won't choose to be famous, Crowe," I said. (I never could get accustomed to call him by his first name. It seemed a familiarity.)

I remembered later the strange smile he gave me.

"I'm thinking of writing a fare-thee-well for a suicide," he said lightly, "that would not permit a person to be forgotten right away if he left it behind him. I may turn it over to somebody, eh? . . . somebody I might find who'd like to go a little differently?

"But you're right, old man," he said seriously. "I'll never kill myself."

II

I DID not see him for nearly two weeks after this. Once I called him on the telephone, but he told me he was busy . . . designing or writing, I gathered.

When I did see him it was at his request. He telephoned me from his apartment. It was something important, he said, and I would find the door unlatched. I was to come right in. . . .

I found Leigh Crowe spraddled back in his chair . . . dead . . . with tongue hanging out and all signs of strangulation. One hand was clutched on a sheaf of paper on his desk. Later it was found he had put a coin on his tongue and inhaled it so as to close the wind-pipe. After the Chinese fashion, he would have told me, had he been alive.

I had a strong affection for my friend, and was immeasurably shocked at finding him dead, yes, and surprised too, in spite of his strange hobby. Yet it was precisely this hobby that came uppermost in my mind as I saw the mess he had got into. I remembered the document he spoke of writing; his "fare-thee-well for a suicide." I knew the sheaf of paper under his hand was the thing. Strangely impelled, I reached for the first. . . .

It was evidently the first draft, but there were no erasures or corrections. Here and there the mood of the handwriting varied. Some paragraphs seemed written fluently and impulsively. Others revealed, by a heavier bearing on of the pen, his stops to think, and the convinced determination with which he put down conclusions that shaped slowly. The thing may have taken a day, or two weeks, to write. It was done sure-handedly, either way. It was no play with words . . . though . . . well, it was close knit and somehow . . . inevitable. Perhaps I had better stop at that.

It was inevitable in its Satanic logic and unescapable in its suggestion. Peculiarly, there was no worded mention of

suicide, yet the whole thing led up to it. Perhaps the title, "My Last Will and Testament," was explicit, but that was all that was. The paper would not be admitted to probate by a sane surrogate. It willed no property; only a state of mind more powerfully malign and suicidal than I ever saw expressed. That is why I tore it up.

There was no telling who would collect the inheritance. If I had been tender-minded and suggestible . . . but I'm not. Yet, tough-minded though I am, the document almost persuaded me to an act which, in the next world, I should probably have regretted.

I never saw so damning an indictment of life, nor could I have imagined that in the mind of the gentle Crowe such a one could form itself. It was related to no definite experience of his. It was no anecdotal thesis—no list of grudges. It was in general terms . . . but what terms, what poignant, cold analyses of the scheme of existence and the principles that I had supposed worked free of questioning by Crowe's fervent intellect! What questions of God and man were propounded in this malevolent rhetoric! What answers!

The document would have served as a blasting monument to any suicide's death. Crowe had made good his boast of leaving in a way that demanded attention, yes, even a sort of fame. His was no simple domestic note. It was a philosophical and literary masterpiece. Exposed to the terrible potency of his arguments the wonder would be should anyone fail of killing himself . . . Remembering it, even now, I feel . . .

As I stood there, beside Crowe's chill body, and read the thing in that violent ten minutes or so before I tore it up (for the protection of society I tore it up) it flashed over my mind that my friend had no intention, when he commenced to write, of putting the seal of death on his composition. Remembering his curious detachment, and especially his hobby, I believed that he would have felt least of all like suicide after having created so masterful an argument for it. He had called me, I

felt, not to discover this unlovely dead body, but to show me the proof of his genius.

"There!" he had intended to say, I reasoned, "read that, and tell me if it is necessary for these beggarly suicides to leave the world without expressing their sentiments immortally. There is a way to cheat life and death at the same time . . . there before you!" I could imagine his telling me.

I crammed the fragments of his thesis into the fireplace and set fire to them. As I turned from watching the blaze I caught his eye on me, or so I thought. It gave me a guilty sensation, that only the consciousness of his essay's menace drowned. Not even for his fame, I told myself, had I the right to sacrifice other lives as he had sacrificed his.

I forced myself to walk over to him

and to look down into that face which had been, I know, a mask for a spirit easily influenced by ideas and impressions. The shock of his writing and the motive with which I destroyed it exalted me, perhaps, over the ordinary impulses and reactions one has in the face of death. I looked down at him and wondered. . . .

It was a powerful indictment. You think you know what life is, but Crowe . . . this proved he knew it better, a damned sight better!

I'm tempted to set it down . . . almost . . . Br-r-r-r!

. . . I wonder if spirits read newspapers over there. I wonder if he saw the *Evening Tripe* now; read its effort to supply a motive, adding one more commonplace. . . .

Still, that's part of life. Crowe wrote . . .



If I Were Master

By Morris Gilbert

IF I were master of the nights and days
I'd put the impudent stars out one by one,
And hang a sooty hood over the sun,
And sweep out of the streets the dirty haze
The moon drops in its loafing shiftless ways;
I'd grab the ends of the winds as past they run
And tie them in knots would never come undone,
And so I'd make a nothing for your gaze.

Then, pondering, like a doctor, I would stand
And listen to your memory; watch in hand,
Time the diastole of hope; then I'd compare
Timidity's chill wastage with the trace
And fever of assurance in your face . . .
And after all was done I might despair.



Thirty-four Footnotes for an Autobiography

By C. L. Edson

1

HEARING a Y. M. C. A. lecturer tell five hundred men how he raised hell in his youth till he broke his mother's heart and shamed his father to death, I noticed that the audience wept buckets of tears, especially when the exhorter told how he struck down his mother with a fist blow in the face, and I learned then that my taste in amusement was different from that of honest, Christian men.

2

When I was staging a variety show, the manager of my leading act, an ex-prizefighter, instructed the members to refuse to go on at the last minute unless given a hundred dollars more than the contract called for. I turned to an actress and said: "Go on or be canceled. If this thug says another word I'll beat him to death." The pugilist was awed, and they went on.

3

A friend fell in love with a woman ten years his senior and when he asked for advice I pointed out that she would fade soon. He replied: "No, not she. I have seen her mother and a picture of her grandmother and they are mere girls. She comes from a line of women that never grow old."

4

At an Arkansas mountain railway station where the *Bahnhofverwalter*, in

his pride of learning, rides the illiterate yokels, I called in the costume of the country to transact business with the railroad and was asked among other questions: "How do you know there is anything here for you? What do you know, anyhow? Do you know anything?" When he reported to division headquarters that the station was wrecked, doubtless he said that he had talked baby talk to the wrong baby.

5

A Salvation Army trio held a revival in my home village and converted an imbecile the first night, but they got no further converts, and at the third meeting even this one slid from grace, announcing in his childish patois: "Me don't want to dough to Heav'y; me want to dough to Hay!" Which shows a blow hole in Harold Bell Wright's dictum that God made the idiots for Torch Bearers of His Truth.

6

I once worked on a weekly paper of vast circulation that printed news dispatches that came direct to the editor by telepathy, and in these dispatches honest citizens were accused of murder and other crimes in circumstantial detail, yet none of the accused ever sued the paper for libel. Needless to say, the paper was published in Kansas. One of the men of whose murder it accused two famous men, turned up alive, but the paper never retracted.

7

I knew a New York newspaper editor of marked ability who flew into a rage at seeing the pictured weapons in the screen play, "Cabiria." "Those are not the kind of swords and armor used at the fall of Carthage," he cried. "I know, because I was there."

8

I have three times found lost purses. The first contained two dollars and I kept it. The second was a lady's gold mesh bag containing eleven dollars and a railroad ticket. I found it in a street-car, and gave it to the conductor. The third was a leather satchel containing \$100,000. A miser had become so excited in a courtroom that he went away and forgot his money, probably for the first time in his life of sixty years. The last to leave the courtroom, I found the money and took it to his hotel, and he got his treasure back before he knew he had lost it.

9

I have had my pockets picked twice and my hat stolen once.

10

A barber near the Rock Island station in Chicago pretended to get "scalp worms" out of my scalp, and "germs" which he showed me in a cheap microscope. He offered to sheepdip me for a dollar.

11

I have experienced two major optical hallucinations. In one I saw twenty human figures and mistook them for reality. In the other I mistook a rolling stone for a running rabbit and pounded it with a club until the stinging pain in my hands dissipated the hallucination.

12

I was struck beside the knee with an axe blade so forcibly that both legs were swept from under me, but the knee

tendon was not severed and no permanent injury ensued. I tripped and fell headlong with an eight-pound broad axe, sharp as a razor, on my shoulder. I expected the blade to decapitate me when I struck the ground, but it simply chipped my left ear.

13

A literary agent in New York invited me to go home with him to dinner. Before starting we drank too much and I couldn't remember where I was and he couldn't stand up. I told him that I could hold him up if he could remember where he lived. "My head's all right," he said, "but my legs are all in." So I acted as the legs and he as the eyes, and, hanging on to each other, we steered from the New York Press Club to his apartment in 150th Street. There he introduced me to his wife and went to bed, and she and I had a fine dinner together.

14

A one-legged flagman at a crossing at Cumberland, W. Va., began following my writings and managed to get wind of them wherever they were published. I later found that the fellow was feeble-minded. He placed his motherless children in an institution and from the welfare worker who investigated I learned his condition. If there were enough feeble-minded men in this country, I would be a popular author.

15

I once faked for the hypnotist, Professor Flint, and worked my way up to a star part in his show.

16

A Harvard professor once criticized a story I wrote in which the hero purposely blinded a fighting bull. "No such cruelty is permissible in good literature," he said. I sent him a copy of "Oedipus Rex."

17

I interviewed a religious maniac who

called himself Adam God. He had shot three policemen to death and said: "On the Third Day these dead bodies will rise up and be made whole. If they don't, I'm the damnedest fool that ever lived."

18

With a German shoemaker I made a bet on Bryan. After the election the shoemaker returned my money, saying: "I don't regard it as good sportsmanship to keep money that a man loses betting on Bryan."

19

I knew a preacher who was accused by the girl organist. He made a sobloquient defence before the church members and the meeting was turbulent when the vote was taken. Only three men voted to oust him and they were at once mobbed and thrown into the street. The three men were the fathers of the three previous organists.

20

When I was younger, I picked up a friend on my travels and when his money was gone I did not know how to get rid of him. So I pretended to be penniless, too, and we walked the streets of St. Louis all night. By morning he was so sleepy that I was able to duck him in the 6 o'clock crowd and I ran for a cheap rooming-house and went to bed.

21

An old scoundrel (an unordained preacher) once cut a lot of my timber by trespass and in denouncing him I took a chance and told him I knew of other crimes of his that he ought to be jailed for. He sank down in fright, too weak to rise. I learned several years later that he had been a counterfeiter of nickels. To counterfeit nickels is to brave the penitentiary twenty times for a dollar.

22

When I was editing a moron-fiction magazine I bought several stories from a yokel in the West. One day he called on me in New York and presented a card he had been distributing on the train all the way from Seligman, Mo., to Grand Central:

Author of
THREE BAD MEN OF KILDEE
THE GORING BULL OF
PULVER
THE CHINAMAN'S WEDDING
LESLIE ARDMORE, Writer

Manager of
Vernon TOMSHECH, World's
Champion Light Weight Wrestler.
Challenging any man of his weight,
in the world

23

When I was seventeen I stopped a runaway horse about to pitch a woman into a ravine, and she told my mother: "A boy with eyes like those of your son will never do a dishonorable thing in his life."

24

A college classmate told me: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself for running after my wife"; but what I was ashamed of was the way I let that small-time Mrs. Potiphar pursue me.

25

A negro took two of us for ghosts one night, and, thrusting a pistol against my chest while the lady hid her head between my shoulder blades, tried with shattered nerves to pull the trigger, while I said to myself: "When it goes bang it will get us both, and hubby will have a chance to prove in court that he didn't do it."

26

I have lived in a town named Noah's

Ark. It was first called Noah's Switch, Ark., but was shortened to Noah's Ark.

27

I was denounced as a "paid agent of Wall Street," whatever that is, by a radical weekly having 980,000 circulation, and the charge was regarded as a sound one by my parents and all my relatives, which taught me that men do their thinking with their diaphragms.

28

Going to Chicago, I met a poetess of note, read some of my stuff to her, and was distressed to find that she had her arms around my neck when her husband unexpectedly walked in.

29

There was a certain desirable literary job open in New York and a hundred well-known men asked for it, and I got it. Drunk with egotism, I lived a year in a world of ecstasy; and while this ruined my career I look back on it now without regret; for to be intoxicated for a whole year is worth any price you have to pay for it.

30

Once I thought I had drawn a royal flush and became so excited that I could not read my cards, but I was wrong on one card.

31

Understanding the principles of mental healing, I cured a paralyzed woman, the wife of a *Saturday Evening Post* writer, by waving my hands and

repeating a lot of mysterious nonsense. Later when their ugly bulldog had a fit, the lady telephoned to me, although her husband's desk was in the same building, and I replied: "I do not cure dogs; besides, the neighbors have fed him strychnine. I am sending you vibrations to help you calm yourself; the dog will grow calm without our aid," which proved to be the case.

32

Passing through Mishawaka, Indiana, I stopped to call on an old friend who was a lawyer, a Democrat, a Methodist and a leading citizen. His black-eyed stenographer was as sedate as he was. My New York talk alarmed the lawyer, who feared it would corrupt his stenog. I then offered to buy a dinner in Chicago to the one of them that could name the most drinks. The lawyer named whiskey, beer and wine, and then stopped, but the stenographer opened up and called off fifteen drinks—also their ingredients and what shaped glass each one was served in.

33

As a boy, going to the butcher shop with a quarter, I knelt beside a prairie rose, and, offering up a prayer in praise of Beauty, lost my coin and went home without the meat. This is an epitome of my life.

34

I wrote the love letters for a rich Russian at seven dollars a letter and won him an opulent bride, and now whenever his wife goes abroad he has me write her some more letters to show that he hasn't lost his virtuosity.



The Wife's Side

By Laura Kent Mason

THE news of her husband's unfaithfulness seeped through to Grace Coles as such news generally does, in indefinite, ugly, peculiarly undramatic and unnovel ways. For some time she refused to believe at all the facts that were given to her. She quite satisfied her own feelings and her own emotions by throwing them off, by not accepting them. When Marie Marberry asked innocent-seeming questions, Grace answered them as if they had no other significance. She accounted for Lyndon's absences by his explanations of them.

It was not until that Tuesday morning in April that she admitted the truth to herself. Even the facts, then—facts she could not ignore—came in commonplace, cheap fashion, in accidents that we will not admit can happen and that do happen.

Two things and both over the telephone. She went to the telephone about eleven o'clock to ask Lyndon to attend to something for her—a basket of fruit to be sent on shipboard the next morning to a departing friend—no use making an extra trip in town for it and if you telephone you can't depend on what they'll send. She knew, of course, that Lyndon had two telephones on his desk in his office, one a private 'phone, with a direct wire, the other connected with the office switchboard. She had both telephone numbers. Almost unconsciously she called the general office number, as she usually did. In that way, she could always leave a message with the switchboard operator.

"Mr. Coles don't answer," said the girl in her usual monotone. Mrs. Coles

objected to the telephone girl as she always objected to her husband's feminine employees—as women usually do. A fresh piece!

"Is he out of the office?" she persisted.

"I don't know," answered the girl.

"Please ring his 'phone again," Grace was annoyed.

"He is talking over the other 'phone," the girl said and added after a minute's pause, "Is there any message?"

Grace hung up the receiver. Then, more to prove to herself the girl's incompetency than from any immediate need, she gave her operator the number of Lyndon Coles' private telephone.

There was the usual buzzing, a wait, ghostly murmurs, buzzing again. Then a man's voice. Lyndon's voice. He was talking to a woman. Grace had been connected with a busy wire.

"—see why you can't be reasonable, Joe. Be a sweet child and don't start pouting at me."

A sweet child! Lyndon's phrase—to her—years ago!

A feminine voice, now.

"I'm not pouting. But you said Atlantic City this week-end and I've made all my plans. Of course if you don't care—"

"I do care. Don't be a goose. I'd enjoy it better than anything in the world. But the way things are here at the office. I can manage a week from this week-end beautifully. I could leave here Thursday, do some business in Philadelphia that has got to be done and will help cover things. Say, Josephine, be a good little sport—we'll have the jolliest sort of a time—lots better than

last time, even. If you'll let me take you to dinner—"

"All right. Only I'd planned so—"

There was another buzz, the indistinct voices again. Grace had been disconnected.

She left the telephone, stumbled over to the nearest chair, sank into it in a sort of formless heap. So it was true—was true—was true—another woman—a woman named Josephine—who went on week-end trips—got petted and called "sweet child" the way she used to be petted and called "sweet child." There was no denying things now. It was true. Lyndon—and a woman named Josephine—her home broken up—

Not half an hour later the second thing happened, proving, if proof were necessary, that things were quite as bad as she thought them to be.

She had not stirred from her chair when the telephone rang. She sat there while the maid answered, until the maid spoke to her.

"Someone from the Lady Fair Shop, Mrs. Coles. They want to speak to you about your account. It's mixed up in some way, he said."

Grace went to the telephone, managed a casual "Hello." After all, commonplace things had to go on.

A brisk, masculine voice at the other end,

"Hello, Mrs. Coles. The Lady Fair Shop. You've ordered things during the last month, I believe, and gave two addresses, your home address and Mr. Coles' office. We didn't know whether you wanted the bills sent to you or to Mr. Coles. There was some mistake last month about deliveries, I believe, and I wanted to get things fixed up—"

There had been no mistake last month so far as she knew. The Lady Fair Shop was a poorly managed but attractive little place where she occasionally bought pieces of expensive lingerie.

"Why—I—" she started. Then,

"You have the bill there?"

"Oh, yes."

"If you will read the items to me—"

The man read—expensive things—

gowns—envelopes—camisoles.— Grace had bought only a few of them.

Grace's voice was still casual, cool. She was surprised at it, herself.

"I think," she said, "you'd better send the whole bill to Mr. Coles' office. It will simplify things. I—I usually send my bills there. You needn't even mention having telephoned. Mark the bill 'personal' and Mr. Coles will attend to it himself."

Again she hung up the telephone receiver and sank limply into a chair. There was something almost funny about it, this time, as if Fate wanted to be sure that she understood things. Twice, in one morning—both errors. She couldn't blame the telephone company nor the little shop. It was just time she knew. It was life doing this to her, that was all.

She went slowly into her bedroom, lay down on the *chaise longue*, unconsciously pulled the frivolous lace coverlet over her negligee. So—this had really happened. It happened to other women, of course. It happened in stories. But now, it had really happened to her, Grace Coles.

II

Of course she really wasn't surprised. She had had hints already. Besides, every woman probably goes over in her mind the problem of what she would do if her husband were untrue to her, just as she goes over the problem—far more delightful—of being untrue to her husband. But they are vague imaginings, usually, and float away when more material thoughts take their places. Grace had suspected Lyndon before. She had talked with other women, as women always do, not so much about her husband's real actions, but about what she would do if her husband were untrue to her. She had always said, "I wouldn't stand him around for one minute. I'd get a divorce. A man like that—" She had only half believed what she had said, just as she had only half believed her suspicions. Now she was sure.

She felt a mixture of hatred and cruelty toward Lyndon. More than that. She felt as if he had definitely cheapened her—his treatment of her, his ignoring of her, his indifference to her. Her hurt vanity—that was the worst of all. Lyndon Coles—after being married to her for fourteen years—it was fourteen—to treat her like that! Wasting his money on a woman—laughing at her between them, more than likely. All sorts of worn-out, melodramatic phrases came to her—"he has robbed me of the best years of my life—," "tossed me aside like an old glove," "untrue to the wife who has been faithful to him—"

She would do something! She would show him! She would ring up her lawyer and start a divorce suit right away!

She remembered, then, that the only lawyer she had ever had was Lyndon's lawyer, little Bannet, a conceited, fat little fellow. She could get Bannet first, she thought, and then Lyndon couldn't get him. Why get Bannet? Louise Bannet, his wife, was a stupid, inquisitive sort who probably knew all about Bannet's clients, just as a doctor's wife knows about a doctor's patients and pretends not to. No, she wouldn't get Bannet. There were other lawyers she could get, of course. Forrester or Willard or Blair Pitman. Blair Pitman—

The affair had been mild enough, as such things go. To a more attractive woman it might have seemed nothing at all. It was the sort of thing that may happen to a woman without making any lasting impression on her. Blair Pitman had sat next to her at a dinner party and they had found much in common—at least it had seemed so to her. Pitman had called a couple of times, after that, had taken her to tea perhaps two or three times. Then, one afternoon when he called they had been all alone and had lapsed into one of those conversations bordering on the sentimental which seem sincere and sensible enough and yet are usually a wedge for lovemaking. Before the end of the afternoon, Pitman had taken her into his arms.

On subsequent occasions Pitman had

followed this up with more lovemaking, with vague suggestions that they run away together and with less vague suggestions concerning a more intimate relationship. Because Pitman found that she preferred the safe harbor of a more conventional relationship and would not venture beyond that, he abruptly discontinued his visits. To Grace, the fact that she had "given up Blair Pitman" always remained in her memory as a momentous sacrifice to virtue.

Now, thoughts of Pitman came to her with almost overpowering poignancy. She forgot that her affection for him had been fleeting, as his had been for her and that fear of discovery had been the real reason she hadn't had an affair with him. She preferred to think, now, that it was her loyalty to Coles—she had sacrificed herself to him and now he, in his turn—

Oh, well, she could get a divorce, even now—a divorce and alimony. She could marry again—marry Blair Pitman, like as not—have her happiness still. She'd show Lyndon.

There had been Rufus Helm, too. He had found her awfully attractive. Of course, Helm was married, now, no longer counted, but, if he had liked her there would be other men—

She got up from the *chaise longue*, walked over to her dressing-table. She felt a horrid, hollow, frightened sort of feeling—things were happening to her and she didn't like it. Often, before this, when she had been bored—though she was usually rather content with things—she had hoped that something might happen. Now, things were happening—too many things—she didn't like this idea of uprooting her life, starting over again. Lyndon was untrue to her—keeping a woman—that was it—something had to be done.

She daubed cream on her face, started making up. She had never been a pretty woman, though, in her twenties, she might have been described as handsome. Now this attractiveness was gone. She had a rather sallow complexion and her face was too flabby and full. Her eye-

brows met in the center and she had to keep them plucked. Her nose was a trifle heavy, a little thick and too long, so that her profile was not good. She was the sort of woman who is inclined to be always a trifle moist and although perspiration is supposed to be a sign of health, it is not an aid to feminine daintiness.

She looked at her face, carefully, in her hand mirror. She was thirty-nine. She had no lines on her face, not even around her eyes, but there were brown shadows under them, prophecies of bags to come. She went to beauty parlors too frequently to have a pronounced double chin but there was the suggestion of one, too full a curve. The beauty specialists had been unable to prevent the sagging of her mouth and cheeks. She was a well-preserved thirty-nine but she could not have deceived anyone about her age. She still thought of herself as a fairly young woman and rather a good-looking woman, too. She wore expensive clothes which she had made at little shops, never paying less than a hundred and twenty-five dollars for a nice frock or suit. She bought her accessories in Fifty-seventh Street and chose things she considered "good" instead of showy novelties.

She knew what she would do—she would telephone Blair Pitman and ask him to meet her for tea. She had seen him only two or three times during the past years, but she rather thought that he held a deep and lasting affection for her. She would talk to him about Lyndon—get his ideas. Then she could let him take her case. If—if things went all right—and if Blair Pitman still cared for her—why—that would be so much the better. No use looking ahead too far, of course—but if—

She opened her closets and her dresser drawers, looked over her clothes, decided what she would and would not take with her. Of course she would go. She couldn't stay here with Lyndon, now. She didn't know how to stay and tell Lyndon not to come into his own home. Maybe she'd leave right away—

today—not face Lyndon again. That might be the best thing to do. She'd talk with Pitman first—get his ideas.

She dressed, ordered the car, talked with women friends on the telephone, telling them only the most trivial things, made several engagements for later in the week. At one o'clock she took luncheon—as usual, the simple luncheon she always ate. She was always dieting more or less, for she was apt to put on weight rather steadily if she didn't.

She was surprised that she was able to eat at all. She ate her chop and toast and salad quite as if this were a usual day. Her mood had changed. The first horrible feeling had disappeared. She was even pleasantly excited over the prospect of seeing Blair Pitman. The thought of being a widow opened half a dozen new avenues.

She telephoned Blair Pitman directly she had finished luncheon. His voice sounded grave, formal, over the telephone. Of course it would sound that way during business hours. She made an appointment to meet him at the Ritz at half-past four that afternoon. It was quite all right to have tea with him. She wanted to keep her own actions above reproach—Lyndon wouldn't be able to get any evidence against her.

When the car came, she went on half a dozen errands, as if nothing were happening to her. She wouldn't say anything to anyone, of course. She wasn't like the woman who talked and then never did anything. She wouldn't say a word but she'd do something, really. Then, others could talk if they wanted to.

She called on Mrs. Henning at the hospital, ordered the basket of fruit for the next morning's sailing, called for a blouse that was to be dyed—she wanted to see if they had got the color right.

Just fifteen minutes late, she was at the Ritz. She knew it would look better if she were a little late—not so anxious. She found Blair Pitman waiting for her. They went down the stairs into the tea-room. When she was seated at the tea-table she got her first real look at him.

Quite at once Grace knew that she would never marry him—that he would never marry her, for that matter. He was frankly middle-aged. But then, she was middle-aged, too. It was more than that. He had a certain unpleasant aloofness about him, a formality, a smug politeness, even. He inquired, politely, after Lyndon Coles. He hinted, with a heavy attempt at roguishness, that he knew she had up her sleeve some charity or other that a poor bachelor was going to be asked to support. She could see that it was only as Mrs. Lyndon Coles, wife of a prosperous man, that she was being tolerated at all.

They had nothing to talk about, none of the "in common" things which had been their meeting-ground seven years earlier. She could see Pitman looking at her, taking in her sallow complexion, her rather sunken cheeks, her thickening nose. She knew that to him she was without charm. He treated her politely, impersonally. With a shudder Grace realized something—the way Pitman was acting was the way all men treated her.

She looked across at Pitman and, even to her, Pitman lacked the things she had expected to find in him. He had become unlovely with the years, too. Facial defects had become magnified, a wrinkle between his eyes, a heavy mouth. He had acquired a vacant expression. When, occasionally, she caught sight of his profile he seemed to have no expression at all, just a sort of woodenness. At that, he was the most presentable man who had ever noticed her—and he wasn't noticing her now.

They talked. Pitman skirted personalities, gave vague, uninteresting glimpses of his life. It was plain that he was curious as to what Mrs. Lyndon Coles might want of him.

Grace knew, as she talked, that she could never let Pitman get her divorce for her. Not on account of any disappointment as to an aftermath, but because she could not acknowledge to him her defeat, could not let him see what she had become—a wife whose husband

didn't care for her. If he found it out, later, from others, that was different. But to give the case to him, to see constantly his condescension, to feel him avoiding a more intimate relationship, that was impossible. She searched in her mind for an excuse for the tea and found it. Before they parted, Pitman had promised that his firm would do a certain amount of legal work free for a really good charity with which Grace was connected—one that needed legal work.

III

WHEN Grace arrived home, shortly after six, the maid told her that Mr. Coles had phoned, saying that he would be delayed in town for dinner, a business engagement. Grace said she would dine at seven, alone.

She went to her room. A business engagement! How like Lyndon—to think he could get away with a thing like that! Well, hadn't he got away with it, up to now? Yes, up to now! Now—Grace would show him. She'd show him what she could do.

What could she do? She thought of that as she slipped on a negligee—no one ever dropped in, evenings, without making a definite engagement in advance.

She had thought, always, that if she knew Lyndon was untrue to her—if she really knew it—that she would not hesitate one minute before leaving him—getting a divorce. She had said, dozens of times, that she "wouldn't be tied to a man who didn't want her." She had had one other view, too. That included some advance thinking about "sauce for the goose." She had heard women say that, if both parties of a marriage contract go their own ways and have their own affairs, they could still achieve a pleasant sort of married friendship. Grace had believed that, part of the time. She had believed these things, of course, before she was sure Lyndon was unfaithful.

All through dinner, which she ate alone, as she ate so many of her meals,

she thought of herself and her problem. After dinner, she sat in the softest chair, ate chocolates and pretended she was reading a magazine.

If she were only young and good-looking, she'd show Lyndon. You bet she would. If she were ten years younger, even—

Then she went back ten years, twenty years. She faced another truth that she had evaded.

In talking with her friends, she pretended, as the other women did, too, a great early popularity. With her features she did not dare boast of having been beautiful at eighteen, but she hinted of disappointed lovers, of opportunities for marrying money which she had passed by.

Now, looking at things squarely, she knew that she never had been popular, either ten or twenty years before. In fact, it had been quite a problem to get married at all. In the town she had come from, a busy, Middle West manufacturing town, she had been the oldest girl of a large family and, from the first, a sort of wallflower. She had always helped her mother, nicely, with the cooking and the darning. When she had gone to parties she had sat out dance after dance, humiliatingly conscious of her sallowness, her heavy eyebrows—that was before the days one plucked them to more slender proportions—her too-heavy nose. She never knew quite what to say even to the men who did dance with her. She knew that the way you interested men was to ask questions and get them talking about what they were doing. She used this method with pathetic conscientiousness and no success. If the men did tell her about themselves, she was bored, listening. If they didn't talk, she had nothing left to say to them nor they to her. Other girls, ignoring this first law of conversation, would babble on about themselves and seemingly have an awfully successful time of it.

She had spent several winters visiting various relatives. Sometimes a girl who isn't a favorite at home will, as a visiting

girl, have unbelievable success. Even as a visitor she was unpopular. She was not a good dancer for she did not keep time well and was hard to lead. So, she had lingered on at home after her sisters were married. When she was twenty-five, her sister Effie, two years younger, invited her to go with her to a New Jersey summer resort, where, in return, for the trip, Grace could help take care of the two babies who were now included in her sister's family.

At the resort she met Lyndon Coles. She had, of course, pretended popularity and as there was no one there from her home town nor from any of the places she had visited, she quite got away with it. Coles was rather a bashful fellow, then. He was just starting to make money and was enjoying on this vacation the first fruits of success. A week after he met Grace they were engaged, and a month later Grace and Effie and the children came on to New York and Grace and Lyndon were married.

Lyndon gave her practically everything she wanted, though of course when she allowed her imagination full range she wanted thousands of things on a more elaborate scale. She was free, however, from petty pecuniary worries. She had servants and as soon as cars became more than a novelty she had her own car. She was respected, if not admired, as the wife of Lyndon Coles. She had friends in her own circle, simple social honors. Yes, that was it, it was as Lyndon Coles' wife that pleasant things came to her.

She had never loved Lyndon. She knew that. That was one reason she was able to think so calmly, now. Like nearly all women, her sexual life meant little enough to her. Although, occasionally, when with a group of women, she listened to or repeated bawdry stories she thought that plain speaking about sex was indelicate. As a matter of fact, she put sex out of her life as much as possible. Excepting for the few times when she had contemplated love affairs and when, too, she read highly sensational novels, she did not think of sex

at all, though she was inhibited and restless and had an undercurrent of moody dissatisfaction with things. Mostly, though, the luxury she was able to have numbed her into a certain stolid contentment.

For several years, now, Lyndon and Grace had lived quite apart, though they met at breakfast, sometimes, and at dinner frequently. For all that the breaking of any real times mattered, there was no reason, so far as she was concerned, why Lyndon should not be untrue to her. She hated the idea of another woman being in Lyndon's life. She thought it "disgusting" that sex should play an important part with a man. She thought it "disgusting" now to learn that Lyndon had yielded to a temptation.

IV

IF she divorced Lyndon—

There in her comfortable chair Grace went over things. She could prove her case, of course. That part would be simple enough. She could get alimony. But Lyndon was clever. She knew that. She would not get as much alimony as she needed. She would have to give up things, her car, maybe. She'd have to have a smaller home, fewer servants and luxuries. She'd be a divorced woman—that would be all right if she were attractive, but she wasn't. She would have the stigma of not having been able to hold her husband. Widows, all excepting a few attractive ones, were always out of things, neglected, she knew.

She wouldn't marry again. She was sure. That was out of the question. To men she was absolutely without charm or attraction. Why, she hardly knew what to talk to them about. She never talked to any men but the husbands of her friends and business acquaintances. Lyndon would probably marry. If not—this Josephine—then someone else. Even if he didn't, he'd always sort of have something on her. At forty-two—Lyndon was three years her senior—he looked quite his age, too,

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but he was rather fine-looking and had acquired in the past years a certain manner and dignity that passed for breeding. A man of forty-two was quite in his prime—while a woman—. That was the trouble—life was like that—nothing she could do—

If only she hadn't found out! That was it. Then things would have gone along—just as they had always gone. Lyndon had probably been untrue to her for years and she hadn't really known it. Quite likely Lyndon didn't want her to know. He was attentive, in a way, casually polite. He gave her enough money to run the house and for her own expenses. He hated scenes and upheavals. He liked the way the house was run. More than likely he even liked matrimony—the way things were. Having a wife sort of kept him safe—she knew how Lyndon loved to play safe about things. Undoubtedly he didn't want to marry that—that creature or he would have seen to it his wife found out about the affair before. He was clever in ways like that. He didn't want her to know. That was it. He was satisfied. Satisfied enough, anyhow, to let things go on.

Of course the other woman wished he was free. That didn't matter to Grace—except that she definitely didn't want to please the other woman. In stories, now—stories always took the other side, the man's side, getting away from an understanding wife—and Grace knew she had little sympathy with most of Lyndon's rather peculiar and often sentimental notions—or the Other Woman's side, showing what a fool the wife was. Yes, that was it. Sometimes, too, there were stories about the wife giving up her husband in the end—or holding him, knowing that he would return to her in the end. There were stories, too, where the husband is won back, by the wife pretending she wanted her freedom, or through jealousy.

All the stories she had ever read, it seemed to her, took the man's side or the side of the Other Woman. Lyndon had married her, hadn't he? He had made

a bargain. There was another side, wasn't there? Surely there was. A side writers didn't pay any attention to—the wife's side. If she hadn't known about Lyndon—

She did know. What of it? Nobody knew she knew. Not a soul. No one really would tell her. They might hint. What of that? Wasn't it always said that wives or husbands heard the affairs of their consorts last of all. She wouldn't keep quiet because of any false belief of "getting her husband back again." Not at all. She didn't want him back any more than she had him, now. She was jealous of the other woman, of course. She hated her. There was nothing she could do about that. Not a thing. Lyndon would probably get tired of her and get someone else, like as not. But, at least, in a way, Grace would be the one who had Lyndon. Not that she had any great affection for him. But after all, he was her husband. She wouldn't turn him over to Josephine or to any other woman.

Why had she been so excited about the necessity for doing something? Why had she been so nervous and upset all day? She wondered about it, now. Josephine was an unreal figure to her. She wouldn't try to find out any more about her. If she never saw her, she could, in a way, forget her existence, forget this whole ugly thing. Her own life would go on as it had gone on, pleasant, idle. Selfish? What of it? Lyndon had that—that woman—they were selfish, too, in their ways. Each for himself. She had her own life to lead. She liked things the way they were. She would keep them that way.

She gathered up her magazine, went to her bedroom, pleasantly drowsy. She was Lyndon's wife. The wife's side counted, too. Of course. She wouldn't do anything—just let things go on. She knew that was the thing to do. She was—only the wife. Maybe so. She felt that she would get more than either of the others, when you consider everything.



Reflecton After a Kiss

By Walter B. Lister

"FEW women are beautiful," mused the Creator.
And he created darkness.



A MAN'S failure arises from missing his opportunity. A woman's from missing her cue.



De Profundis

By Victor Thaddeus

I

SHRIMP salad disagreed with Mr. Thompson. He had not eaten any for years. He put the plate back on the counter, and moved along to the coffee urn.

"Glass of milk!" he ordered.

It was the rush hour in Miffin's Dairy Lunch. He had to stand up awhile before there was an empty chair. Finally he was able to sit down in the middle of the long row of silent, eating men, of whom one or more rose occasionally to fetch water, salt, pepper or catsup. He arranged his pie, milk, and fried potatoes on the arm of his chair. Then he ate slowly, and without appetite. His food never digested properly. He removed his nose-glasses, and rubbed the bridge of his thin nose. The white tiling hurt his eyes. He was not able to finish the pie, and he left his milk glass a third full because of the sediment which turned his stomach.

He got up and pushed his way through the heavy doors, drooping listlessly, while a spotty boy, with raw hands and flat, glistening hair, darted to the vacant chair, wiped away the ring of milk and the crumbs, and gave the seat a rapid flick for the next gentleman, who stood waiting. A north-bound surface car stopped on the corner. The doors flew open.

Automatically, as though operated by the same invisible machinery, he stepped off the sidewalk and entered. When the lights of the drug-store appeared he pressed the button, paid his fare, and dismounted to the street again. The car tracks were only half a block from

his home. It was this fact that had induced him to buy ten years before. He avoided the puddle at the curb, hidden by the shadow, but which he knew to be there, walked slowly along the iron fence until he came to his own gate, stood deliberating a moment upon the broken hinge which he intended to fix next week-end, mounted the stoop, unlocked the door, and passed into his home.

The house was hot and smelt of kerosene. He was not accustomed to that smell yet, and it irritated him. Mrs. Gregg, who kept the house in order now, used kerosene on the floor mop. Jenny had used only water. He lit the gas in the hall, and went upstairs to the bedroom.

Sitting on the bed, he remembered that it was Monday night, and just two weeks since the night when he and Jenny had had the big fight over their looks and ages. Jenny had been standing over there by the table in her nightgown preening herself before the mirror. That's what she had reminded him of—a fat, ugly, ridiculous bird pecking at itself before a mirror. Her nightgown touched the floor at her heels, but was held several inches above the instep in front by her abdomen.

In the mirror she had seen the look on his face, and had turned upon him with a fury he would never have believed her capable of. He had lost his temper. He had told her he was sick of this business night after night, month after month, year after year, that she was a woman of fifty and not a good-looking girl, and that she had better get into bed. She had told him he was a dried-up little man who might as well be dead

as alive. He had turned out the light while she was talking, and had hidden the matches. A week later Jenny had died suddenly from acute appendicitis.

Mr. Thompson got up and placed himself before the mirror. He did not miss Jenny. He disliked to think about her. Now, as he regarded his bald head, dull eyes, and corrugated forehead, he hated her memory.

It was Jenny who had done this to him. She had dried him up with her perpetual nagging. She had never entered heart and soul into the haberdashery business. Many a time during the last twenty years of their married life he had wished she was dead. When the appendicitis began he had hoped that would carry her off, but it had only bothered her at intervals during five years. And to the last she had persisted in decking out and perfuming her person as though it belonged to a woman of the street. He had suggested this to her once, and she had got red all over her fat face, and had grinned as though she actually liked the idea.

Mr. Thompson reflected that he might have married a good-looking woman who would also have taken an interest in his business. Instead, in a moment of folly, for it was too far back for him to remember the details now or to reconstruct his frame of mind and temperament at the time, he had married Jenny. For her he had sacrificed many things that other men did not hold sacred. He had kept virtuous for one thing. He had always been true to Jenny, though their relations as man and wife had ceased years ago. Now that she was dead he intended to have his fling. And he intended to start tonight.

II

HE put on his best suit, with a new shirt, tie and silk hose he had brought back from the store with him. He gave his shoes a good shine, first with a brush, and then with a piece of one of Jenny's old flannel nightgowns that he had long used for a rag.

But, when he inspected himself in the mirror, he was not satisfied with his appearance. The lines, the pale lips, the sallow complexion, remained. He went to her cosmetics and toilet articles, which he had told Mrs. Gregg to arrange in the first drawer of her bureau as he wanted to use the top for his own dressing table now. These he used, watching himself carefully in the mirror. They made a difference. But his eyebrows were still too pale, worn-out looking. He found a black stick, and rubbed that on; also on the gray hairs above his ears. Then he used some of Jenny's talcum powder and perfume.

All the time he was getting ready, his anger against Jenny kept rising. As his looks improved he saw himself as the man he might have been had she not worn him out by her lack of sympathy. The perfume on his own person which had always repelled him when on that of Jenny, awakened long dormant desires. There was a photograph of Jenny on the wall. He took it down and shoved it into a drawer. He left the house intending to make a night of it. But he went to the store first to finish arranging some new stock on the shelves.

When he issued onto the street an hour later, and locked up the store, he felt as though he had been born again. The night air was cold and bracing, and seemed to pass from his lungs straight into the tissue of his body. He took off his glasses and placed them in their case. At a corner newsstand he bought some peppermints to improve his breath. And it was as he was stepping away from the stand nibbling one of the peppermints with his front teeth that the two girls passed, and that one of them looked at him. She was the taller, and walked with swinging hips. Mr. Thompson felt something choking his throat, and enervating his hands and feet. But he managed to force a smile, and both girls smiled back. They parted as automatically as the doors of the street car had opened for him to enter, each took an arm, and the three of them walked on together.

At that moment Mr. Thompson thought of the street-car and the doors. For how many years had force of habit compelled him to enter a north-bound car when the doors opened, to go—home! Home to Jenny, painted up and powdered up, and cooking in an expensive dress, while she nagged at him to quit the store for an evening and come to the show, or a movie, or some cheap public dance-hall. That had been his home life. And yet he had gone home to it, day after day, month after month, year after year. Jenny had never let up pestering him until the day of her death. But her death had killed that habit. He meant to sell the house, move somewhere else, and have a good time until he ran across a woman who would be a real wife to him. But he would be more careful this time.

He pinched the arm of the big girl. She was more attractive to him than her companion. The uneasiness, dread, almost physical fear, that had gripped him when that girl had first looked at him, was gone now. He had money in his pocket, and he knew that these girls wanted it. They must do what he wanted in the same way that he must do what his customers wanted during the day—smirk, smile, and make himself generally agreeable until he had rung up their cash. But, as he felt in high spirits, he took them both to a show, and bought good seats.

During the show he whispered to the big girl that they would have to shake her friend afterward.

III

MR. THOMPSON had not been to a show for several years. It was a musical comedy with a good-looking chorus. He thought of Jenny trying to fix herself up to look pretty, and felt humiliated. He could not understand why he had not divorced the woman. But, on second thought, he did understand. There had been no real grounds. She ought to have been the wife of some cheap gambler or race-track tout. With

the right woman he could have built up a clothing emporium on the scale of J. B. Hanners on Greene Street.

His eyes fed on the chorus, and his thoughts on the big girl whose hand he had covertly taken hold of. This girl, it struck him, rather resembled Jenny as a girl. Jenny's face, before it started to puff, had been large and open, and not unattractive. If he had only done with Jenny as he was going to do with this girl—just regard her lightly instead of taking her on for a lifetime—how different his life would have been. He would have pleasant memories of Jenny as framed in that passing light mood, instead of hating the picture of his married years.

On the way out he agreed with the big girl to buy supper for both of them. After supper the small one would go away. Mr. Thompson decided to give her a dollar for her company during the evening.

The big girl suggested a place. But Mr. Thompson put his foot down on that. He knew how much they soaked you at that kind of place and, while he did not mind being generous on his first night out, he had no intention of allowing himself to be made a fool of. They would go to Miffin's Dairy Lunch or they would go nowhere. Both girls set up a howl immediately. Only men went there anyway. Mr. Thompson took them to the entrance and showed them the sign, "Ladies Cordially Invited." By now he felt quite master of the situation.

"We get our eats in here!" he said, and pushed the big girl ahead of him through the door, while he pulled the little one through after him.

At that hour Miffin's was not doing much business. The half dozen waiters behind the counter had dwindled to one anæmic woman who paid no attention to them until specifically addressed. A man and a woman sat near the door. Three men were scattered along the back wall. Mr. Thompson noticed that the girls took heart immediately at this, and began to range up and down the

counter choosing plates of food. It occurred to him as a strange thing that such disreputable characters should experience timidity at entering any place whatsoever, whether there were many women there or not.

The big girl took bean salad, pie, coffee and a piece of cake; the little one asparagus, tea, and cottage cheese. Automatically Mr. Thompson first called for a glass of milk. The anæmic woman brought it to him. As she stood facing him, holding out the glass, with milk on her thumb and fingers that had slopped over from the jug, she reminded him of Jenny. It irritated him that here where there was no physical resemblance whatsoever, except perhaps the red eyelids and the way the hair was done around the ears, he should have thought of his dead wife.

"Shrimp salad!" he exclaimed, peevishly, "Double portion."

"Was it you asked for milk?" asked the woman, in a sleepy voice, and brushing the back of the wet hand across her cheek.

"Sure I asked for milk," said Mr. Thompson, taking the glass from her hand, "And now I want shrimp salad, too, double portion."

The woman went behind the false wall, opened a can, arranged the shrimps on three pieces of lettuce, and took the salad out to the customer. And, with the first mouthful of the salad that he took, Mr. Thompson felt a triumphant assurance that he had finally emancipated himself from Jenny and Jenny's influence.

Shrimp salad had always been a favorite of his; but years of worry and work had fixed his stomach so that he could not touch such rich food. Many times he had eyed it longingly in Miffin's and had passed on to simpler staples, and pie, and the glass of milk. But tonight he was out for a spree, and willing to take a chance.

As he ate the shrimp salad, and washed it down with the milk, he cast slow, contented glances at the big girl, remembering that he was going to round off

the evening with her alone when the little one had gone. His appetite astonished him. He drained the milk to the last drop, indifferent to the sediment, and drank another glass.

It had been his intention to dismiss the little girl out on the pavement in front of Miffin's. But cramps seized him as he was paying the cashier. He had barely time to clutch his change and stagger into the cool air.

"Call a taxi!" he said, hoarsely, "I'm sick. Take me home!"

"You ain't sick," soothed the big girl, slipping her arm through his. "That was a bum combination, but you ain't sick. Breathe deep, and see if you don't feel O.K. in a minute. Minnie, you beat it."

Mr. Thompson turned on her with a snarl.

"I am sick!" he whined, "God, but I'm sick. I ain't had pains like this since five years ago when Jenny put on the warm towels. Get a taxi! D'ye want to see me crumple up and die here on the street?"

The little girl went to the end of the block and called in a shrill voice for a taxi. Mr. Thompson climbed painfully inside. He fell back against the upholstery, writhing and muttering.

"Tell him Finker Street, four twenty-three! God, but I'm sick!"

The taxi stopped in front of the brown-stone row.

"Wait here?" inquired the driver, in a disinterested voice.

"Tell—him—to go!" breathed Mr. Thompson, and the taxi went on to the corner and turned.

"Got the key handy?" asked the big girl, helping him up the steps to the stoop.

Mr. Thompson was suffering, but his mind was clear. It had never been clearer even during a bargain sale. This damn night had cost him enough as it was. Except that he was too weak, he would have felt tempted to kick the two hussies down the steps against the iron fence. As it was he motioned them behind him while he slipped the key in the

lock, opened the door quickly, and slammed it in their faces.

He lay against the door several minutes in the dark, cursing them at the top of his voice, until he heard their footsteps leaving the stoop, heard the gate scrape on its single lower hinge, and slam shut again with a clang of metal. The smell of the kerosene nauseated and suffocated him. He staggered upstairs, helping himself by the banister, and tumbled on his bed. He would be all right in the morning but he had a disagreeable night ahead of him.

The perfume on his handkerchief reminded him suddenly of Jenny. She had treated his last acute attack of indigestion with hot towels and hot water to drink. He was in too great pain to be able to crawl to the bathroom for

water and towels. Besides, he had used nearly all the hot water Mrs. Gregg had prepared in the boiler getting himself fixed up to go out, and the little he had left would be cold by now, which meant going down to the kitchen and putting on the kettle. He tossed about on the bed, now gripping his stomach with both hands, now pressing the handkerchief to his nose. He was sick; he wanted Jenny; he needed her badly. He kept moaning, "Jenny, God, but I'm sick! God, but I'm sick!" while his bed moaned and squeaked with him.

The other bed was quiet and empty. Mrs. Gregg had dragged the mattress and covers downstairs several days before to give them a good beating and an airing.



Scholar

By Amanda Benjamin Hall

WITH all the irritation of its youth
 I see your puppy passion rise and fret
 Against the cool, white platitude of me.
 How tedious is the face of an old truth!
 Mumbling of life, you claim you owe a debt
 That must be paid somehow disastrously
 By dint of learning. So I say be gone,
 With copy-book and primer seek your school
 And let me wait you cheerfully forlorn
 The while you win the honors of a fool!

Go forth in patches. Try your luck and learn
 Till you are alphabetically whole.
 Knowledge is progress. If when you return
 You wear instead some patches on your soul
 I'll smile perhaps. Perhaps with shaky touch
 I'll kiss them, thankful you are hurt so much,
 And finding love at games with laughter, you
 May wonder how old things can seem so new.



Opinions

By Jay Jarrod

THE fellow placed his arm about the lady's waist and whirled her away into the sea of dancers.

"What a charming young man," said the dowagers.

"What an utter ass," said the other men.



The Stranger at the Gate

By George Sterling

SPEAK no word, lest Something hear!
Flaunt no flower, lest eyes awaken!
Though the garden seem forsaken
There is One to fear.

Sing no more the dreamy song!
Past the roses who is hidden?
What awaits the kiss forbidden
Love shall know ere long.

Hush you! In this Paradise
That we find so strange and lonely,
Love consents in silence only.
Touch and tear suffice.

Evening soon shall wake with rain
Voiceless tree and silent fountain.
Shadows of the distant mountain
Creep along the plain.

Seems the garden still so strange?
On the path that two are sharing,
One comes now with hands unsparing
And the face of Change.



The Prophet

By Yardley Dane

MR. FITCH sat with his hands on his umbrella, staring at the man across the aisle. The man was old, and wore a black fur cap with a long visor. He was simply dressed. On the seat beside him was a canvas bag with tools; so that he might be plumber, mechanic, or employed by the railroad as car-whacker. But Mr. Fitch was not interested in the old man's occupation. It was the old man's face that had attracted, and now held riveted, his attention. Occupations did not interest Mr. Fitch. It was life that he was after, and the meanings of things.

Yet his own occupation was not an uninteresting one. He was employed by the Zoological Gardens. His specific duties comprised the taking care of the bison and kangaroo department. It was sometimes incumbent upon him to assume charge of the zebras, and to assist in the administration of the monkey-houses. He was an earnest, thoughtful man of small stature, and much given to reading and contemplation. It had been the ambition of his parents that he become a Methodist minister, but they had died before this wish could be realized. But his bent was decidedly theological, and he spent all of his spare time at the Zoo studying commentaries upon the Scriptures. In his lap now was "The Apocalypse Revealed," by Swedenborg.

It came as a shock to Mr. Fitch when he noticed that he was not the only person in the coach who was looking at the old man. The conductor, standing a few paces to the rear of the seat, was doing likewise. The train pulled into a station. Three passengers entered the

coach, one from the rear, two from the front. One was a fat woman, with a mole on her left ear, and her tongue showing between her teeth. The second was a man with loose arms, and hair overlapping his ears. The third was a boy with a broad nose, and court plaster on his neck. Mr. Fitch observed these details without effort. All his senses seemed marvelously alert, as though keyed for some apocalypse. The conductor collected the tickets, and took up his station near the old man again.

Mr. Fitch leaned still further forward. His pulse was beating at an abnormally rapid pace. His mouth was dry. He had a ringing in his ears. Out of the corner of his eye he saw the conductor, but the old man had his main attention.

The old man's hair was white.

To Mr. Fitch there was something holy about that white hair showing beneath the black fur cap. The old man sat with his head slightly thrown back, looking straight ahead of him. He was not staring; he seemed rather to be contemplating a vision. His brow, high and unfurrowed, seemed to be expanded with thought. A faint smile was on his lips. There was majesty in his eye. Mr. Fitch knew that face—it was the face that he had seen so often in his dreams, the face of a prophet.

Mr. Fitch knew that the world was not as it should be. He knew that there had been prophets, and that therefore there always would be. Mankind needed them, and what mankind needed must come sooner or later, in the same way, as he often thought, liking to bring his thoughts down to a practical plane,

that a shipment of kangaroos would inevitably arrive from Australia to keep the proper number of specimens at the Zoo. He knew also that all great prophets had been mighty iconoclasts, smashing the old idols. And this was what he saw on the old man's face; a contempt for perverted authority, and a determination to spread new light over the face of the globe.

Out of the corner of his eye Mr. Fitch saw the conductor standing tense and expectant. And an immense affection suddenly swept through him. Were they chosen to be the first disciples of the new prophet?—a Zoo keeper and a conductor. Why not? The other prophets had been humble men, and their disciples humble also. He felt like going over to the conductor and embracing him.

And then, of a sudden, Mr. Fitch was tormented by doubt. Only he and the conductor were paying any attention to the old man. There was a gleam in the conductor's eye that suggested he had seen the old man before. The rest of the people on the coach were paying no attention to him. Would not the personality of a prophet compel their attention. Could it be that the old man was not a prophet? But, with great joy, Mr. Fitch remembered that no prophet had been recognized at the outset save by his disciples. To strengthen his resolution he opened "The Apocalypse Revealed" at random, and read:

245. *And the four animals, each by himself, had six wings about him,* signifies the Word as to its powers and as to its guards. That the Word is signified by the four animals was shown above. That by wings powers are signified, and also guards, will be seen below. By six is signified all as to truth and good; for six arises from three, and two multiplied by each other; and by three is signified all as to truth (n. 505); and by two, all as to good (n. 762). By wings are signified powers, because by them the birds raise themselves up, and wings are to them in the place of arms with men; and powers are signified by the arms. Since powers are signified by wings, and each animal had six

wings, from what is said above it is manifest what power is signified by the wings of each one; namely, that by the wings of the lion the power of fighting against evils and falsities from hell is signified; that by the wings of the calf is signified the power of affecting the natural mind; that by the six wings of the man is dignified the power of being wise as to what God is and what is God's; and that by the wings of the eagle is signified the power of knowing truth and good, and thus of procuring intelligence to one's self.

Mr. Fitch looked up with shining eyes. What mind but a great mind could have read all this wisdom in twelve words of John the Baptist? What eyes but those of a true disciple could realize the new prophet when he made his appearance? Now the old man shone in a new light. The old man was seeing his apocalypse. And suddenly Mr. Fitch had a daring, terrible thought. He also would look. He would follow the old man's eyes—those rapt, tender, defiant eyes—

With trembling hands he took out his glasses and adjusted them on his nose. He had an intuition that the sight would blind him. He kept his eyes on the floor. Then he saw the conductor staring—staring boldly. This braced Mr. Fitch. Was the other disciple trying to slip one over on him? Mr. Fitch peeped. The old man had not moved his head. But his eyes had become more defiant; to Mr. Fitch they appeared visibly swelling with resolution. Mr. Fitch followed them and read over the door of the coach:

"Spitting Prohibited by Law of This State."

Mr. Fitch glanced back at the old man. What marvelous arcana had the eyes of the prophet uncovered from beneath these vulgar words? He saw the expressive lips move as though to speak. He listened, spellbound.

Deliberately and belligerently the old man spat. At the same instant the conductor seized him by the scruff of the neck.

Victoria

By Arthur T. Munyan

I

VICTORIA dwelt in an American plan hotel. She had lived there for twenty-eight years and was rather given to pointing with pride with a feeling analogous to that of the eighth Earl of Something as he looks down the vista of past decades. Being the product of illimitable time was for her the cardinal virtue. What the Sphinx is to the desert so was Victoria to The Van Dyke. In her mien, as she stepped arrogantly from the creaky old Van Dyke elevator, was the implication that elevator boys were as the shifting sands, that she alone was immutable.

Her name, of course, was not Victoria; it was Miss or Mrs. some not extraordinary name. Victoria was the name given her by Hildreth, who had in his own mind sardonic appendages for most of the other guests. There was Mrs. Sears-Roebuck, for example, and Pig-Eye, and Lollypop, whose mincingly cultured accents reminded him of Leo Ornstein's playing of the Liebestraum. Hildreth, for industrial and economical reasons, lived at The Van Dyke and fought back the incipient madness resulting as well as he could. In being disagreeable about American plan hotels in general, it is not desired to cast any aspersions upon the national originality that has given us chewing gum and non-alcoholic vermouth. Perhaps the term is a misnomer; that is to be hoped. The only point is that The Van Dyke was lethal in its dullness.

The first time Hildreth saw Victoria was in the dining-room of the hotel: an erect, autocratic, old lady surveying the little printed menu card through her lorgnette. Later he wondered why, after all these years, she needed to look at the card and what difference it made in any case, since she always ordered everything. Then, still later, he learned that looking at the card in the most portentous manner was part of the meticulous futility of her day. "I lie on my back in space and spin the world on my legs," says the fly. "The world," Victoria's thought would have been, "holds its breath while I note that as on the fourteen hundred and fifty-six previous Tuesdays we have Roast L. I. Duckling. Tradition speaks as I order it. The parvenus about me and the world at large bicker along, little dreaming—"

Life at The Van Dyke was as simple as living in a barrel—and as colorless. Meals were at stipulated hours. As Hildreth fell into the routine of the place, boredom seized upon him, and as the monotony bit into his soul, his mental comments on his surroundings became more and more caustic. In the dining-rooms of the place, with all the guests gathered in the horrible business of eating, the atmosphere was more acutely corrosive. He made the best of it, entertaining himself with desultory sarcasm directed at the service and tasteless food, and with imaginary insult to the other guests. The sport was meagre, and the quarry small. Nothing said of the viands could have had the true dimensions of sarcasm;

no insult really was possible to the smug habitués.

His waitress, Marie, did her Amazonian tasks well. It seemed as though everybody appeared at table at the same time. There was no dining early or late to escape the herd. Marie's charges, among them Victoria, invariably beset her *en masse*.

"My Gawd!" Hildreth would exclaim under his breath, "look at that woman!"

Victoria dined in magnificent isolation, as might a solitary goddess. Her oblivion to the others, and to their possible right to a share of the service, was little short of perfect. She would start in by ordering everything on the menu, and while impatiently waiting would munch some gruesome and glutenized product surely never intended for exhibition in public. Her soup invariably required salt. With an indescribably regal gesture of two foot arc, she would sling salt, getting a great deal of it into the bouillon. The glands below Hildreth's ears would go into convulsions at the sight.

No impression is intended that Hildreth merely caviled at an old lady's table manners. In the very first place, Victoria transcended all manners. She antedated the genealogy of manners. "Manners," said the swing of her good right arm, "are the bugaboo of slaves." As though to prove it, she would toss bits of bread into the soup, and after floating them about for a time, decide that she did not care for any. The next course would find her completely hemmed in by plates, bird bathtubs, and the complex paraphernalia she required for tea. Of this array she made her selections. She never ordered what she wanted; she always ordered everything and then rejected half the items in high dudgeon.

"Marie!" she would call. "Marie! Mariemariemarie! You may take away this salad." And Marie, distractedly trying to serve a family of four and its two horrible guests,

would make a frantic trip to remove the blot of the offending salad's presence while the dinner party jolly well waited. She held a fork in a way no human being ever did, or could. Her fork darted like a cobra's head, snatching food from the remote visage. The silver seldom pleased her and generally required exchange with one or another table, much to the dismay of Marie, whom the hotel held to a strict accounting for the silverware.

The Van Dyke always offered a choice, so to speak, of three desserts. Occasionally, to save time, Marie would simply bring all three rather than wait to be told the inevitable. Victoria would suddenly discover them before her as she ceased the machinations with a tea-ball and divers pots and pitchers of hot water and "cream." She would thrust the apple pie aside with a sort of ferocious gusto, extract one raisin from the mince pie and taste it, and then spurn the latter as though she had found it to be loaded with nitric acid.

Perhaps the matter of food is unduly stressed. The dining-room is not the only theatre of action. The answer to that is that in Victoria's case it may reasonably be considered largely so. Whatever little else she did, apart from enjoying, in her fashion, three meals a day, she did in the same self-centered manner and spirit. Now and then Hildreth engaged her in brief, banal conversation. Had she been outdoors today? She had. And the stirring of Spring had quite escaped her, the roar of the city had fallen upon deaf ears, with money and leisure for anything, nothing had touched her. Some new boots, likely enough, had not pleased her. That was the summation of her day. Hildreth had never heard a more serious arraignment of the world. It had brought her boots she did not like! She would branch off on the major topic of boots and the personal equation. Her life, figuratively, was food and boots.

Victoria was not a cantankerous,

querulous old lady. She was self-centered and pampered—pampered by herself. She was, in her own estimation, the absolute aristocrat, an aristocrat of age with a fixed belief in divine right. It seemed to Hildreth at times that only a very great age would merit such an assumption of aristocracy as was hers. He pictured her, exactly as she looked today, awaiting news of her tea ships in 1690, or, again, scornfully scanning the public prints over her dejeuner in 1810. Nothing would ever happen to her, of that he felt sure. She had always looked, would always look the same. She would never die. She would, as the decades rolled on, simply continue to grow more narrow and more patrician.

II

AND then, curiously enough, something did happen. It almost, one way of looking at it, revealed Victoria paradoxically in the rôle of a daring, generous spirit.

Among the circle of mouths administered to by Marie was that of Miss Hill-Bryce, a singularly petulant and over-active mouth much given to such remarks as: "My dear, I just bought the dearest evening wrap for only seven hundred today."

There was something about the girl that unfailingly aroused Hildreth's ire; she was an "eggplant" in his estimation. She had the breeding of a longshoreman and the gentle charm of an Indian monsoon, which her presence in the room resembled. She was, in short, a spoiled, insufferable *nouveau riche* of about twenty. She was, with her eternal screaming lucre, so physically all over the dining room that everyone more or less cordially detested the sight of her.

"Needs a medical prescription," Hildreth used to grant. "Chloral hydrate, now. . . ."

It was luncheon time, well along in the hour The Van Dyke allotted its inmates for the noonday repast,

but comparatively few people were in evidence. Hildreth was just debating with himself whether to endure the dessert or to pass it up when Miss Hill-Bryce flapped into the room and flounced down at her table. She always behaved as though acting a part—the part of the rich Miss Hill-Bryce—unaware of the admiration she evoked. She swaggered in a self-conscious unconsciousness.

Hildreth, glancing up, noticed that she carried, besides some parcels and nonsense of one kind or another, a handful of bills. She always had a handful of bills. She carried bills in the same manner and for the same purpose that a Roman lictor was wont to carry fasces, to proclaim her caste. She fumbled with her parcels, eventually getting them disposed about the table, and then tossed the roll of bills aside with studied carelessness. She informed Marie that she was very "busy" and that she "must simply fly" and ordered hurriedly.

A moment later a boy approached her table to say that she was wanted on the telephone. In smugly simulated annoyance at the weight of affairs upon her, she rose and followed the boy. Nobody watched her with any particular attention; Miss Hill-Bryce's antics were too familiar to excite much interest. Marie served her luncheon order and, shortly after, Miss Hill-Bryce returned. There was an explosive gasp, a rattling of parcels, and then an exclamation of dismay.

"My allowance! My money!" she cried.

Her rather babyish face was the picture of genuine concern.

Marie came over to her table and raised her eyebrows interrogatively.

"Did you see my money, Marie?" Miss Hill-Bryce asked breathlessly. "I left it here."

Marie shook her head. The few people about took little notice of what was being said. Miss Hill-

Bryce's frequent and spontaneous furors were not as a rule especially contagious. The general unconcern about her, and in a larger measure Marie's lack of knowledge or even interest, apparently nettled the girl. Her pouting lips tightened, her eyes rested on Marie stonily.

"Marie, I believe you took it!" she declared suddenly.

Marie was aghast. She colored and protested nervously.

"You must have! Nobody else has been near this table."

She turned to one of the other girls.

"Call the head waitress!" she ordered.

There was a moment's uncomfortable silence and then the head waitress came, followed a little after by the hotel manager. A little group gathered about Miss Hill-Bryce's table, while the manager asked a few questions in a low tone.

"I did not take the money," Marie told the people gathered about her. "I have not seen it," she said simply.

Miss Hill-Bryce stamped her foot angrily.

"I want this girl arrested!" she demanded.

Marie protested angrily, and everyone looked distressed and helpless.

A silly confusion, commonly pursuant to such a situation arose. Miss Hill-Bryce was haughtily demanding that something be done and that very quickly; the manager, in the hushed tones that one takes toward an *enfant terrible* about to disclose the family skeleton, was trying to calm her. He would see to it, he assured the young lady, that the matter was thoroughly investigated, would question Marie at once in his office. He suggested it, and finally prevailed upon all immediately concerned to withdraw to his office. Hildreth lingered in the dining-room.

Hildreth, personally, felt inclined to doubt Marie's guilt, notwithstanding the rather sketchy evidence pointing to her. It was, on the contrary,

unlikely that anyone would attempt theft under such relatively unfavorable conditions, considering the question quite apart from Marie's character. They could do nothing more than fire her, he concluded, and they most certainly would do that.

"Hill-Bryce will see to that," he told himself. "She's rich as mud. Smead (the manager) won't dare do anything else. Nearly faints every time she passes the desk as it is."

Being discharged under the circumstances would be tragedy for Marie, he knew. She had given him the outline of her story from a word dropped now and then as she served him. She was not long in this country, having come not many months ago from a peasant home in Wales. She was quite without friends or influence in the city, and working at a servant's wages, would have little enough reserve to tide her over any such rainy day as impended her. Her chances of getting other employment without references, without training or experience, were obviously slim. Yes, there was tragedy ahead for Marie, looking at it from her angle, even though Hill-Bryce's unsupported word were incomplete evidence actually to convict her of the theft.

"Too bad somebody can't help her out of the mess," he mused. "She'll have to go if Hill-Bryce says the word," he repeated to himself. "Imagine Smead holding out for her, or risking Hill-Bryce's wrath on anyone's behalf!"

His futile rumination was interrupted by the entrance of Victoria, erect and austere as ever, imposing in what seemed to be a Sunday-go-to-meeting attire of stiff, black satin.

"What's this I hear about one of the waitresses?" she asked directly, as she took her place at the next table.

Hildreth, with a feeling of distaste for the entire episode, related briefly the little scene just enacted. He added what was uppermost in his mind, that it was "too bad."

Victoria, already preoccupied in selecting everything on the menu for luncheon, half listened, and replied vaguely that it was, to be sure, "too bad." She was the last one in the world likely to be seriously disturbed by the woes of one of the hundred million.

"Too bad," she repeated, giving even less meaning to the words than before.

"Marie is slow this noon," she then observed, changing the subject and glancing anxiously toward the swinging doors to the kitchens.

"I guess you didn't understand me," Hildreth explained to her politely. "Marie was the waitress I was speaking of."

"How's that?" Victoria queried sharply.

Again Hildreth explained and, as he made everything clear, Victoria's eyes began to blaze.

"So they say she stole it!" she snapped. "I don't believe it! Marie was the best waitress I've had in I don't know when."

"Well, they will probably only discharge her," he suggested craftily.

With his words the full significance of the occasion burst upon Victoria. Her generosity was not greatly stirred by the abstract case of injustice, but an accusation against one of her favorite minions was quite another matter. It was *lese majesté*.

"We'll see!" she said grimly, her old jaw set in a stubborn line.

She rose and stalked from the room straight for Smead's office. Hildreth followed.

III

MARIE'S inquisition was in progress, Marie standing defiantly, Smead sitting at his desk confronting her, Miss Hill-Bryce sitting in an armchair nearby, her heavy sable coat still draped about her, coldly following the trial. The office was not enclosed; it was a manner of alcove behind the room-clerk's desk. Victoria entered

without ceremony and surveyed the group with a glance eloquent with disapproval.

"Well, well, Smead," she snapped in her peremptory manner. "I have just been in to luncheon and found no service—no service whatever—and not even an apology to help me keep my temper!"

Smead was looking exceedingly harried. Miss Hill-Bryce had evidently been most unpleasant about the loss of her money, and now here came Victoria to be even more unpleasant about nothing beyond a small deficiency in the service quite beyond his control.

A man less servile, a little more skilled in the casual graces, might readily have begged privacy, her indulgence, for the delicate matter on his hands. Not so Smead under Victoria's hawk-like scrutiny. He explained falteringly the circumstances of Marie's absence from her post. As he talked, Victoria took deliberate observations of Miss Hill-Bryce much as a chemist might squint at a test tube behaving in a peculiar and irrational fashion.

"Well," she asked coolly, as he finished, "did you find the money in Marie's possession?"

They had not, it seemed.

"Humph!" Victoria commented.

"Of course we didn't!" Miss Hill-Bryce put in impatiently. "She's had plenty of chance to conceal it since she took it!" She evidently considered it high time that the person most concerned had some part in the conversation.

Victoria sniffed. She was an adept sniffer. Being sniffed at by Victoria was no light matter, either. It was like having the Curse of Rome hurled at one.

"What," she asked crushingly, as one who would at last interpolate a little sense, "did you fetch your money into the dining-room for?"

Miss Hill-Bryce did her best to snub Victoria, but there was something impervious to snubs in the

venerable, uncompromising face. The girl's withering look seemed never quite to reach the old lady. She addressed the manager, ignoring Victoria as completely as she was capable of doing.

"I am pressing no charges," she said loftily, "but I insist that the waitress be dismissed. I don't want a servant I am not sure of about me. Either that or I leave your hotel. You have that alternative."

It was Victoria's move and certainly she did not hesitate; she forthwith cut short any apparent choice of action that Smead may have fancied he had left him.

"And I," she announced tyrannically, "will not tolerate the girl's dismissal on any grounds. She is the first intelligent waitress you've ever had here. I don't believe she's a thief any more than you are. She serves my tea as tea *should* be served." The old lady was direct even if not altogether logical.

"You heard what I had to say," Miss Hill-Bryce threatened the manager. Her voice held an ominous calm. Smead looked miserable and hunted.

"If you discharge Marie I shall leave!" Victoria countered. She turned contemptuously on Miss Hill-Bryce. "And I have lived in this hotel for twenty-eight years and don't intend to be moved by any *whipper-snapper*."

Miss Hill-Bryce gasped. Marie gazed dazedly at her sudden champion. Victoria herself gave nobody much time for thought; her sway was complete, and she faced her adver-

sary with all the majestic scorn she could show.

"I don't believe you lost the money at all!" she scoffed. "Land sakes"—in a sudden access of rage—"look alive, girl! Look in your pocket!" She darted a contemptuous forefinger at the bulging pocket of Miss Hill-Bryce's fur coat.

Miss Hill-Bryce intensely wanted to remain cool and aloof, and could scarcely avoid quailing. She probably would rather have been beaten than obey the imperious gestures, yet instinctively her hand executed Victoria's command. Stupidly she drew from the depths of her pocket handkerchiefs, powder puffs, theatre ticket stubs—and a roll of crisp new bills. She held it out helplessly, her surprise too genuine, her mortification too complete, to allow her words. For once, the effervescent Miss Hill-Bryce was speechless.

"I thought so!" was Victoria's acrimonious comment. "Silly little fibbertygibbet!"

But after all, Victoria was not one to gloat. She did mumble something about "addlepat" and Hildreth was glad she hadn't left that out. It was too complete a characterization to withhold from an appreciative audience. But Victoria had come simply and solely to commandeer Marie to her own ends, and she summoned the girl now, cutting short any gratitude or emotion.

"You must hurry and get me my luncheon, Marie," she said, not unkindly, "I'm afraid, as it is, all this has made me late for my afternoon walk."



The County Seat

By Julian Kilman

THE main thoroughfare in Parkers-town is wide and well-paved and glares in the heat of the afternoon sun. Ford cars abound; they are driven at high speed by boys in overalls.

The fire department engine house, deserted and dusty looking, stands next Miss Sharp's millinery store; next is the Metropolitan Dry Goods Company; next, the Sugar Bowl, which thrusts a big sign over the sidewalk bearing the laconic message EAT—the place belongs to a Greek and is called by the local wits "The House of the Greasy Spoon"; next is The Hub, trafficking in gents' wear; then come the Parkers-town Dry Cleaning Company with the sign "We Kleen Clean"; the Parkers-town Emporium; the New York Store; the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company; and so on.

Across the street is "The Parkers-town Republican," an ancient weekly newspaper of democratic leaning, with an editor forever trying to make his neighbors understand that the origin of the present Democratic party rests in what was once called the Republican party. The paper boasts that it "has the largest weekly circulation in the State."

Down by the bridge stands the building of the Parkerstown Buckwheat Company. Painted on the side of the structure facing the stream furnishing water power is the following: "The Largest Manufacturer Of Buckwheat Products In The World."

On a side street is the Opera House, rejuvenated as a movie theater where worn-out films of the "classics" do their utmost to ruin the eyesight of the Parkerstown people.

S.S.—Sept.—9

Far up the street is the court-house. It is situated on a knoll and old elm trees shade the lawn. In the centre are two ancient cannon and two pyramid piles of ninety-four cannon balls each. A towering monument with four ghastly life-sized sailors and soldiers ("the largest monument," the native announces, "ever set up in a rural county") stands between the cannon. It bears the legend: "The population of Nicholas County in 1860-61 was 20,112. This County supplied 2,105 soldiers during the War of the Rebellion."

One Nicholas County white man in every two, after the Dred Scott decision, shouldered a musket and went south to participate in that astounding conflict. It would seem that nothing could be more significant in this community of superlatives than that monument.

At six o'clock the stores all close and young men and women begin strolling the streets in considerable numbers. Several of these boys now so modishly garbed with the standardized product of the Rochester clothiers were the youths speeding in the Ford delivery cars during the hot day. Quite a number of them loaf to the local depot to witness the fast New York train go by. It does not stop at Parkerstown. The train is referred to as "The Flyer."

The farmers begin to drive in; many of them still using horse and buggy. As it grows dark the flirtations become more frequent, the youths more bold, the maids less reticent. Maturer women, some of them married and seeking romance, slip out of their houses and move by the Congress Hall Hotel with an eye out for the traveling salesman—and he is there!

Overhead the stars shine; the air is of a delicious coolness after the heat of the day. Farther along the main street in the residence section where the elms mellow the light, many couples, having deserted the "white lights," sauntered along engaged in the eternal business of sex. One hears much low laughter, and swiftly there comes an impression of life that is instinct with virility; that is palpitant, lush.

Back in the Congress Hall Hotel, from the upper porch of which they tell you that General Grant delivered a speech in the fall of 1868, a well-kept man of sixty years or so reads a Buffalo evening paper. He sits in a swivel chair and has his feet about even with his head. In front of him is the desk with the register, a book fastened on a pivot so that it can be swung around. Somewhere in the rear a youth whistles a melody. He does it with infinite skill and the interpellation of many extemporized arpeggios.

The manager of the Metropolitan Dry Goods Store saunters into the Hotel. He is at his ease, and smoking a cigar. His idea is that he may encounter the circuit judge who has come to Parkerstown to hold the June term of court.

"Good evening, Jim," he says, in a friendly voice.

The gray-haired hotel proprietor peers over the top of his glasses at the man he has known all his life.

"I don't recall ever having seen you before," he remarks.

Across the street in the upstairs law office of Wallace & Thurstone, attorneys and solicitors, a game of draw poker is about to start. There are five men: Thurstone, the younger member of the firm who served overseas as a lieutenant and is now district attorney; Jarvis, the banker; Kirby, the worn-out, dyspeptic druggist; Jack Manning, only two years in town, well-dressed, affable, but of vague antecedents, murmuring of life insurance when pressed by the curious; and finally, George Burger, who runs the Emporium. Burger is big and beefy

and is outclassed by his companions. His fingers know that two from two leave nothing but his brain fails to grasp it. He is like a little boy trying to do big things. So his business is doomed—and he is just finding it out.

Before the game starts Thurstone takes Burger to one side and shows him a letter. Burger reads:

You men are violating the law playing poker for money. Mr. Thurstone, you ought to be ashamed of yourself, you the district attorney. If you keep it up I am going to write to the governor.

The letter is signed "One who knows."

"When did you get it?" asks Burger.

"This morning," replies Thurstone. "Now, look here, Burger. Your wife wrote that."

Burger studies the writing.

"It ain't her handwriting," he answers.

The lawyer exclaims in impatience.

"Oh, that's easy. She has disguised it or got someone to write it for her."

They play until three o'clock in the morning. When the final settlement comes the inept Burger has lost \$60. On their way home Jarvis tells Burger that he has no business in the game. Jarvis knows this because the bank holds plenty of the Emporium "paper."

Burger steals into his house endeavoring to make as little noise as possible; but his wife is awake. In her nightgown she meets him at the head of the stairs.

Burger bursts out:

"Did you write that letter?"

"Never mind about that!" retorts the wife. "I want to know how much you lost tonight."

The man goes on into his room and undresses. The two quarrel and in quarreling bandy the names of numbers of the leading men in Parkerstown.

Outside, the stars, with the indifference of eternity, continue to shine. Afar a cock crows; there is a faint light in the East. It announces the dawn of another day for the County Seat.

Undeveloped Notes

By George Jean Nathan

§ 1

CRITICISM is the art of appraising others at one's own value.

§ 2

Great drama is the souvenir of the adventure of a master among the pieces of his own soul.

§ 3

Art states what we know in terms of what we hope.

§ 4

In the baggage of three immigrants, German, Russian and Polish, who were recently detained at Ellis Island, there was found respectively (1) a copy of Hauptmann's latest play, (2) a novel by Gogol, and (3) Paderewski's "Légende No. 2" for pianoforte. The taste of the last three Presidents of the United States has been respectively (1) for golf, (2) for Keith vaudeville, and (3) for Griffith moving pictures.

§ 5

The useless always has an irresistible appeal for me; that is why I devote myself to dramatic criticism, perhaps the most useless thing in the world. I have an unconquerable fondness for the purposeless luxuries of life, the things that are not practical, the little circuses of the soul and heart and taste and fancy that make for the merriment and pleasure of the race if not for its improvement and salvation. Years ago, in my nonage, I said to myself: "What is the pleasantest and most useless thing to which you may devote your life?" After

considerable deliberation I concluded and replied to myself, "Dramatic criticism"; and I have since followed, and profitably, my own advice. For centuries men have written criticism of the drama in an effort to improve it, and with it the public taste. What has been the result? The "Frogs" of Aristophanes, written 405 years before Christ, has never been bettered in any way for dramatic satire; the "Iphigenia" of Euripides, written 425 years before Christ, in any way for profoundly moving drama; or the "Oedipus Rex" of Sophocles, written 440 years before Christ, in any way for stirring melodrama. The imperishable romantic drama of Shakespeare fingers its nose at all the dramatic criticism written before its time, or since. And in the matter of improved public taste the most widely successful play in the civilized world in this Year of our Lord 1922 is a crook mystery play by Avery Hopwood and Mary Roberts Rinehart called "The Bat."

§ 6

Criticism should be written not for the dramatist, the actor, the producer or the public, but largely for itself alone. Generically an art out of an art, it achieves authenticity as an artistic entity in the degree that it weans itself from its sire and stands upon its own legs. In this way and in this degree was Horace a greater artist-critic than Aristarchus, Cervantes a greater than Molina, Sir Philip Sidney a greater than Ben Jonson, Dryden a greater than Addison, Goethe a greater than Lessing, Voltaire a greater than Diderot or Beaumarchais, Zola a greater than

Hugo, Dumas *fil*s or Sarcey, Coleridge a greater than Hazlitt—and is Walkley a greater than William Archer.

§ 7

There is a type of critic that vaguely believes there is something about a pretty woman that prevents her from being as capable an actress as a homely one.

§ 8

Sudermann is a Hauptmann in lace drawers.

§ 9

The old critics live in the past. The young critics live in the present. The theatre lives in the future.

§ 10

There is probably not a single educated, civilized and tasteful man in all America who, though richly appreciating the mediocrity of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," hasn't gone to the theatre at one time or another in his life to see it acted. Than this, I can think of no better and no more convincing illustration of the spell of the theatre.

§ 11

The moving pictures are worse today than they were five years ago. This, I appreciate and thus forestall objection, is not criticism. It is merely a statement of fact.

§ 12

Criticizing Eugene O'Neill's "The Hairy Ape" in the New York *World*, Mr. Heywood Broun writes as follows: "O'Neill has attempted to put the stokehold of a big liner upon the stage and to reproduce with the effect of fidelity the language of the stokers. In this, it seems to us, he has failed conspicuously. For all the noise and fury of these scenes, the inevitable censorship of the author is always evident. We hear Yank climbing up adjectives hand over hand in search for an adequate climactic noun, and then the best which

O'Neill can allow him is 'boob.' He seemed, therefore, a hairy ape who had been submitted to curling irons."

Since the noun that O'Neill allowed his character was not "boob," but "bastard," the inevitable censorship appears to have been less that of the playwright than that of the playwright's reviewer.

§ 13

The critic is worthy in the degree that his mind feels and his heart thinks.

§ 14

Art is not the meal of life; it is the appetizer. Only poseurs regard it as the former. Life without art would be indeed dull and tasteless, but life with art only would be sickening in its surfeit. There are other things in life than art, and some of them are equally beautiful, equally inspiring, and vastly more contributive to the health and happiness of the human soul.

§ 15

A dramatic actress should be shot as soon as she begins to get fat.

§ 16

Satire is unpopular and unsuccessful in the theatre not because the public cannot comprehend it, but precisely because the public can comprehend it. What the public cannot comprehend very often proves a success in the theatre. Witness, recently, Andreyev's "He Who Gets Slapped," which not only the general public but the professional critics themselves, including myself, could not understand. Satire is unpopular simply because it is founded upon unpopularity. If it isn't unpopular, it isn't satire. Its very life depends upon its unpopular nose-fingering of everything that is popular. Popularity and attendant success are merely targets for its custard pies, each one of which contains a slice of brick.

§ 17

I observe that the persons who speak of constructive criticism are those who

speak of the late world disaster as "the war for humanity."

§ 18

Art never follows a flag.

§ 19

Even to the finest dramatic tragedy there is an air of demagoguery that irks me. The tragic dramatist has about him always more or less a trace of the moralist and exhorter.

§ 20

Drama is literature. But literature it not necessarily drama. This is why good literary critics often prove themselves bad dramatic critics.

§ 21

Strong hearts are moved most often by the tremours of weak ones. We are touched not by dramatists who have dominated their emotions, but by those whose emotions have dominated them.

§ 22

The drama may be realistic in almost every department save that of love, which is commonly held to be the field of its most realistic endeavour. If the average love-making scene out of life were to be placed on the stage word for word, gurgle for gurgle, and gesture for gesture, the audience would, after a few preliminary sardonic yawns, go soundly to sleep.

§ 23

The Viennese writes of love at 5 P.M. The Frenchman, of love at 12:30 A.M.

§ 24

If I were appointed official dramatic censor, I should, with negligible exception, promptly shut down every play that was doing more than \$6,500 a week.

§ 25

"I prefer vaudeville," says Woodrow Wilson, "because if an act is bad it is soon over. When a play is bad, the situation is different." A typical example of the Wilsonian reasoning that

prevailed during the late war. It is true that if a vaudeville act is bad it is soon over, but what of the succeeding act, and the act after that, and the act still after that? What of them in the aggregate? How many *good* acts has Woodrow seen in all his long experience with vaudeville? Or does he still admire trained seals, Swiss acrobats and xylophone players? "When a play is bad, the situation is different," he says. What is there to prevent him leaving? Or, since the great majority of plays that show in Washington have had a preliminary run in New York, what is there to prevent him from learning about their quality, in advance of his attendance, from the newspapers, magazines or from friends who have seen them? Or, again, which is the safer: to take a chance on *any* play by Shaw, Maugham, Galsworthy, Dunsany, Clare Kummer, Ervine, Milne, O'Neill, Guitry, Schnitzler, Verneuil, Robinson, Tarkington, one of the Hungarians, Montague Glass, Bahr, Hauptmann, Schönherr, George M. Cohan, Porto-Riche or any one of a dozen or more other writers for the current theatre, or on the average vaudeville bill? Doesn't Woodrow yet know the difference in advance between a play by de Caillavet and de Flers and one by the Hattons? Or, in all honesty, isn't his æsthetic taste at bottom chiefly for soft shoe dancers, shimmy shakers, and Eva Tanguay?

§ 26

All true art has in it something of impudence.

§ 27

Let us not revile American play reviewing too much. Look at the French!

§ 28

They talk of fine plays ruined by bad acting. Yet what is more odious than a despicable play improved by good acting?

§ 29

Let us in passing not forget to place a flower on the grave of "the dean

of American dramatists," Augustus Thomas.

§ 30

It has been said that great art is the product of trial and suffering. This is nonsense. The great artists of all time, even where they have been poor men sorely beset, whether psychically or materially, have with hardly an exception produced their masterpieces during the periods when a sudden turn of fortune or a kindly patron or an act of the gods has made life, at least temporarily, easy, peaceful and comfortable for them. Nor have they harked back to their days of trial and suffering, consciously or unconsciously, for the inspiration of their masterpieces. These masterpieces have almost invariably been the legitimate children of happiness of the spirit and physical ease. Michelangelo's sacristy of San Lorenzo, the tombs of Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici, the Pietà di San Pietro, the David of the Signoria and the marvelous Battle of Cascina were born thus, as were all of the master works of Shakespeare and as were, too, some of the greatest of the compositions of Beethoven. If Shakespeare in later years harked back to the agony he suffered when his wife, in 1585, presented him with twins, it was only to reduce the incident to low burlesque in "The Comedy of Errors." Beethoven, beset by lawsuits and venereal disease, wrote the immortal music of his "third period," including the Ninth Symphony and the grand fugue for string quartette, only after increasing deafness mercifully relieved him from listening to shyster lawyers and medical quacks, and from thus worrying himself to death. Well, they answer all this with the name of Dante. Dante, they tell us, conceived the "Vita Nuova" and "Divina Commedia" out of the ache of his baffled passion for Beatrice. A pretty tale. But the sordid facts are that, exactly one year and nine months after Beatrice died, Dante married his new girl, Gemma Donati, was apparently equally in love with her, and wrote the "Vita

Nuova" and "Divina Commedia" not only twenty long years after Beatrice had passed completely out of his life, but also after what pain he might conceivably have suffered from his romantic worship of the estimable, if aloof, future Mrs. Simone de' Bardi was drowned to a very considerable degree in the greatly superior travail incidental to the riots of Florence, his banishment by the Neri, his disastrous political and economic failures, his homelessness and heart-sore wanderings, his grievous disappointments and his rapidly approaching physical decay.

§ 31

The actor is an artist by proxy.

§ 32

Expressionism is drama in the sense and in the degree that a telegram is a letter, or that the headlines of a newspaper article are the article itself.

§ 33

If the Actors' Equity Association is sincere in its claim to the best interests of the theatre and drama, it should concern itself not so much with bringing back companies of inferior actors that have been stranded in the hinterland as with seeing to it that they remain permanently stranded.

§ 34

The critic is the business man of the arts. There is small place in criticism for the dreamer of dreams.

§ 35

To speak of morals in art is to speak of legislature in sex. Art is the sex of the imagination. In American criticism art is subjected to an æsthetic Mann Act.

§ 36

The hatred of age for youth is a terrible thing.

§ 37

Great art has outlived a score of gods. It is the only permanent and immortal religion.

§ 38

Gordon Craig's imagination is still patiently waiting for the modern dramatist to catch up with it.

§ 39

Sincerity, integrity of artistic purpose and emotional honesty are not essential to the production of sound and notable art. Consider the genesis of Shakespeare's "As You Like It," Ibsen's "The Master Builder," Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven," and Thomas Jefferson's "Declaration of Independence."

§ 40

An actress should be, above almost everything else, beautiful. It is difficult to interest one's self in the passions and sufferings of a homely woman.

§ 41

Criticism is of three kinds: constructive, destructive, and what may be called condestructive.

§ 42

Among the Pilgrim Fathers who came over on the Mayflower to settle America there was not a single artist, or the son of an artist, or the grandson of an artist, or the great-grandson of an artist.

§ 43

The average modern play has three acts. Its contact with life generally ends with the first.

§ 44

In criticism, valour is often the better part of prudence.

§ 45

There never was an actor who did not in his heart of hearts prefer the rôle of Don Juan to that of Hamlet.

§ 46

The drama lives for us the life of our neighbour in terms of ourselves.

§ 47

Criticism is autobiography applied to art.

§ 48

The actor is the maquereau of dramatic art.

§ 49

The golden days of Greece did not produce one drama half so good as even Porto-Riche's "Amoureuse."

§ 50

Criticism may be permitted as many forms as drama. It may be in turn appropriately comic, melodramatic, tragic, farcical and burlesque.

§ 51

What is good taste? It is *anything* that a cultured man admires.

§ 52

Life is a conflict of principles. Drama, of emotions.

§ 53

Strindberg, the cynic, they sneer, was insane. Well, so was Schumann, the sentimentalist.

§ 54

The theatre lives by emotional sadism.

§ 55

It is a mistake to call Wilde an artificial dramatist. He was a realist of realists. Only his characters, the mouth-pieces of his searching realism, were artificial.

§ 56

"The passion of genius" is a bogus phrase. True genius is not passionate, but hard, cold, analytical, calculating. Every great work of art is the result not of sudden flame and fire, but of reflection, meditation, and chill patience. Dubious talent is passionate. The mind and hand of genius are as sober and temperate as a bricklayer's.

§ 57

I can think of nothing more incongruous than watching "The Weavers" from a box seat.

§ 58

Constructive criticism has a lot to answer for. Think of Maeterlinck!

§ 59

The greater the critic, the more he is criticized. Ten thousand persons have found fault with Shaw for one who has found fault with Brander Matthews.

§ 60

I never write a serious thing that some profound idiot does not arise to say that I don't mean it.

§ 61

Criticism of the arts consists in an intellectualization of emotionalism.

§ 62

The heroes of drama are not magnifications of the heroes of life, but reductions. No play on Napoleon has ever caught to any degree the size of the actual Napoleon. Stensgard of "The League of Youth" is merely a jitney Maximilian Harden, and Dr. Stockmann of "An Enemy of the People" but a miniature Senator La Follette. Lucio in "Gioconda" is D'Annunzio himself, but through the wrong end of an opera-glass. The hero of Tolstoi's "Power of Darkness" is a lilliputian Gorki. What stage captain of industry has equaled the late Charles Yerkes, what war correspondent of highly coloured stage melodrama Frederic Villiers? The Trigorin of Tchekhov's "Sea Gull" is Remy de Gourmont, Jr., the clown of "He Who Gets Slapped," a declension of his own dramatist-creator. Think of Manson in "The Servant in the House," and then of Jesus Christ. Go a step further. Think of Othello, and then think of Leutgert!

§ 63

Art demands oppugnancy, resistance, conflict. If unanimity of taste and opinion prevailed in the world, there would be no art.

§ 64

Has there ever been an actor who did not aspire to be, at the same time, something else: a painter, a writer, a social favourite, a musician—something to make him, in the eyes of the world, not merely an actor?

§ 65

His prejudices are the tipples with which a critic reanimates his drooping talents.

§ 66

The foremost active producing director in the theatre of today is Jessner. He makes all the rest seem like children. With Reinhardt virtually in retirement, there is no one to compete with him. The influence of his remarkable imagination will presently be felt all over the world.

§ 67

Much is made of the fact that I often leave the theatre in the middle of the second act of a play. Doesn't this prove my devotion to the theatre as nothing else could? If I didn't love the theatre would I, when the play is that bad, wait so long?

§ 68

Thought is not dramatic. Drama must therefore purge thought of everything but its active verbs.

§ 69

If the Le Bon theory of crowd feeling is true, the theatrical manager should take advantage of it in a direction that, thus far, he has overlooked. I refer to the matter of the seats in his theatre. These seats are at present constructed in such wise that they slant backward, and so cause the persons sitting in them to sink against the backs of the chairs. Accordingly, the general view of a present-day theatre audience, for all its interest in the play it is watching, is of an assemblage of persons afflicted with a mood of languor and relaxation. That this aspect of the

audience exercises its evil effect upon the variable number of its members who are, at best, already but moderately interested in the play, none of us who has studied a theatre audience can doubt. Now, if the manager saw to it that his seats were constructed in just the opposite way, that is, slanted forward instead of backward, Le Bon would come to his rescue post-haste. The audience would then be pitched slightly forward, a sense and picture of tenseness and rapt attention would be induced in place of the current sense and picture of comfortable indifference, and the effect upon the emotional recalcitrants would be instantaneous and electrical.

§ 70

The true critic can never be popular.

§ 71

The critic who at forty believes the same things that he believed at twenty is either a genius or a jackass.

§ 72

The critic should never be indignant. If he be an acute and honest critic, he should not usurp for himself the prerogative of his readers.

§ 73

Indignation is the seducer of thought. No man can think clearly when his fists are clenched.

§ 74

Criticism is the *avant-coureur* of platitudes.

§ 75

What the moving pictures need are not more talented authors so much as more talented editors.

§ 76

Now that the Actors' Equity Association has affiliated itself with the American Federation of Labor, the art of Kean, Lemaitre, Salvini, Coquelin, Irving and Booth has been duly exalted to a level with the art of the Cloth Hat and Cap Makers, the Wood, Wire and

Metal Lathers, the Longshoremen's Association, the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butchers, the United Association of Plumbers and Steam Fitters, the Brotherhood of Tin Roofers, the Travelers' Goods and Leather Novelty Workers' International, and the United Upholsterers. The interpreters of Shakespeare in America are at last one with the Journeymen Barbers!

§ 77

There is, to the artist, often no criticism so humorous as that which fully endorses his intent and achievement.

§ 78

The hero of a popular play is always seen by the audience through the heroine's eyes.

§ 79

All great drama is a form of scandal.

§ 80

Beware of the critic who does not now and then contradict himself. He is a foe to the progress and development of art.

§ 81

Huneker is the only critic I know of whose position ever successfully survived an excessive employment of quotations from the works of others.

§ 82

Criticism is the most aristocratic of the arts.

§ 83

In Congreve the talent of Sacha Guitry was genius.

§ 84

The drama of today is the comedy of tomorrow and the farce of the day after.

§ 85

One shaft of sunlight streaming suddenly into a theatre would kill the greatest dramatic scene that a Hauptmann ever wrote.

The Coroner's Inquest

By H. L. Mencken

I

THERE is not much chance, I suppose, that John Kenneth Turner's "Shall It Be Again?" (*Huebsch*) will attain to anything approaching a wide circulation in These States. The newspapers will maintain a clammy silence about it, it will be barred from all the Carnegie libraries, and the morons who teach history in college and high school will denounce it (if, in fact, they ever mention it at all) as Bolshevik propaganda. That it is printed at all is a sort of marvel. Two or three years ago, when I first heard of the manuscript, the author was already in despair of ever finding a publisher for it. Most of those that he had approached were horrified by his argument, and the rest were afraid of the *Polizei*. On the Tuesday following the first Monday in 1920, he began to revive his hopes, for the astounding débâcle of Dr. Wilson on that day seemed to promise a restoration of free speech in the United States. But even so, the generality of Barabbases remained timorous, and it was not until late in 1921 that the book was finally accepted by Dr. Huebsch, who had already declined it, to my personal knowledge, at least once. In the episode there is a mellow and affecting irony. Here is a work that deals accurately and brilliantly with one of the most important periods in American history—a work so relentlessly documented and painstakingly done that it would be impossible, I believe, to detect a single material error in it. It is by a writer of experience and capacity, a sound American of the oldest native

stock, a genuine lover of his country. And yet it went dogging about the anterooms of publishers for three years because official lying about its subject-matter had made its plain facts seem fantastic and fabulous, and because official invasions of the common right to free speech made its publication dangerous.

As I say, I have been unable to detect any material errors of fact in it, though here and there the author's deductions may be reasonably challenged. What he deals with, in brief, is the history of the American share in the war, beginning in August, 1914, and ending with the armistice. To the exploration of that long and vexatious record he has brought an industry that is colossal and a historical realism that is admirable and almost unique. No essential document has escaped his notice. He has read all the official correspondence of the time, all the public harangues and pronouncements of Dr. Wilson, all the utterances of the lesser figures in the tragic farce, and even, it would seem, the complete files of all the chief American newspapers. A great many still more obscure sources of light and leading, not likely to attract the notice of ordinary historians, have yielded grist to his singularly fine and diligent mill—for example, the circulars of the great New York banks and international financial houses. The result is a picture of the time that is extraordinarily vivid, photographic and complete. And the second result is a series of iconoclastic conclusions that, whatever their violation of the current superstitions, are very likely to be

accepted by the unbiased historians of the future. To wit, that the American pretense of neutrality, from 1914 to 1916, was dishonest and ridiculous—that Woodrow began rooting for the English almost from the start, and that toward the end his definition of international law became indistinguishable from a definition of whatever was most favorable to England. Again, that the *casus belli* in 1917—the repudiation by the Germans of a submarine agreement—was a pure invention, inasmuch as the Germans not only made no such agreement as that which was alleged, but specifically protested against it. Yet again, that the declared motives underlying the war, both before the United States got into it and afterward, were unanimously bogus, and that no actual effort was ever made at Versailles, by Dr. Wilson or anyone else, to give them force and effect. Finally, that the official theories of the causes, both proximate and remote, which brought on the contest were chiefly moonshine, and that England, France and Russia had been preparing for it, for ten or twenty years, just as deliberately as Germany, and were no more taken un-awares when it began.

II

SUCH is Dr. Turner's tome in its main outlines. If you are a patriot who believes that a man who discusses the honor of his country is as tacky a fellow as one who discusses the honor of his wife, then you had better avoid it. But if you have begun to harbor doubts about the war for democracy and are eager to get a few beams of honest light upon it, then you will find it extremely interesting and instructive. As for me, I detect several defects in it, despite my agreement with its general thesis. For one thing, it seems to me that Mr. Turner puts too much of the blame for the hypocritical and dishonorable course of the United States, particularly in the years before 1917, upon Dr. Wilson, a man who, despite his constant posturing as omniscient and

omnipotent, was quite as much a victim of the prevailing propaganda as the veriest editorial writer for a third-rate newspaper. For another thing, it seems to me that Mr. Turner falls into the common Liberal error of assuming that the morals of a nation are the ordinary morals of an individual—that the former is to be judged for its acts precisely as the latter is judged. This is seldom true, even under absolutism; it is never true under forms of government which set up an imaginary entity called the state, above and beyond any man in it. This state, psychologically and ethically, is somewhat like a crowd. That is to say, it reveals moral qualities which differ materially from those of the individuals constituting it; and usually the difference is in the direction of the unmoral. A crowd will do things that no man in it, not even the worst, would do alone, and so will a state.

The United States, as nations go in the world today, is relatively decent and even more or less honorable. It is by no means the international burglar and brigand that England is, nor does it show the pathological hysteria and sadism of France. So far as I know, it has never hawked its honor in the market-place, as Italy did in 1915, Rumania in 1916 and China in 1917, nor has it ever been guilty of the grotesque poltrooneries of Denmark and Norway. Nevertheless, a man as generally dishonest as the United States is, both in its dealings with other nations and in its management of its affairs at home, would be ridden out of any civilized town on a rail. The whole course of the country between 1914 and 1917 was that of a pickpocket, a stool-pigeon and a scoundrel. Its relations to Russia and Mexico today are those of a blackmailer to his victim. In Haiti and Santo Domingo it is a common gun-man and sneak-thief. But to assume that such traits and habits are as reprehensible in a nation as they would be in a man is to carry the science of morals to many new places of decimals. The fact is that

the organization of international society is still so defective that it offers a given member very little, if any, protection against the enterprises of the others. If such a member feels itself aggrieved it cannot call in a policeman or apply to a court; it must get its rights by force or go without them. The result is that the morals of nations are the morals of soldiers in the field, not those of peaceful citizens at home. They are based upon the theory that every show of weakness is dangerous—and in the main that theory is perfectly sound. There flows out of it the corollary that a nation is entitled to whatever it can get, and that what it can't get by force it may justly get by chicane. This simple fact explains the whole swindle of diplomacy, and it explains no less the amazing discrepancy between the private morals of statesmen and their public morals in their professional capacity. I haven't the slightest doubt that such men as Dr. Wilson and Mr. Lloyd-George, as private citizens, are as honorable as any of the rest of us. If either of them gave me a bottle of Scotch tomorrow and assured me that it had lain in his cellar since 1914 I'd drink it without the slightest fear of wood alcohol. And yet, as Mr. Turner shows in his book, Dr. Wilson seldom opened his mouth between 1914 and his day of doom without saying something that was palpably false—and to this day no sane man would believe Mr. Lloyd-George, speaking as Premier, on his oath.

It is a vivid sense of this discrepancy between public morals and national morals that is behind the world-wide demand for the establishment of international machinery for curbing the enterprises of individual states. All such enterprises tend to become thievish and unconscionable, and so promote war. The plain people of all lands, who have to bear the brunt of war, tire of them, and dream romantically of international courts of justice that will put an end to them. But that dream, it seems to me, is only a dream. The difficulty of giving reality to it

lies in the plain fact that the only feasible way to keep a given great nation, A, in bounds is to bring two other great nations, B and C, into alliance against it—and B and C, once they have the power to keep the peace, inevitably use it to feather their nests. Such combinations of great nations may conceivably do some good by keeping third-rate nations in order, but they are not apt to keep themselves in order. Even in the case of the third-rate nations they cannot be trusted to do honest justice in every case, for usually they are directly interested in even the most trivial quarrels—and surely no sane man would expect interested parties to make good judges and jurymen. This, in brief, is what is the matter with the existing League of Nations. Theoretically, its aim is to preserve the peace of the world by adjudicating disputes between nations. Actually, its aim is to safeguard the loot that England and France got out of the late war, and particularly the loot of England. Show me an American who is violently eager to force the United States into it, and I'll show you an American who is an undisguised Anglomaniac. There are absolutely no exceptions. The propaganda for it in America has been carried on chiefly by notorious English agents. If the United States went into it, the one undoubted effect would be to convert the Republic into a sort of glorified British colony.

III

IN more than one respect, alas, the Republic is that already. It is one of the two most disquieting consequences of American participation in the late war; the other I shall mention anon. The agitation for American entrance into the war was certainly not started by Americans with the honor and interest of their own country at heart; it was started by Americans whose hearts were in the cause of England, and who were quite willing to sacrifice the honor and interest of the United States in order to further that cause.

I cite as an example the late Walter H. Page. Page's letters, recently published, show how completely the delicate flattery of English magnificoes converted him into a pulling and extravagant Anglomaniac; his state of mind, in the end, was indistinguishable from that of an American social pusher noticed by Lady Astor. I had personally a remarkable proof of the fact early in the year 1917. I was at that time a passenger on a Danish steamship bound from New York to Copenhagen, and, along with all the other Americans on board, was taken into Falmouth, in the Orkney Islands, and searched and cross-examined by the English—a palpable violation of the most elementary international law. Among my fellow passengers was an American diplomatic officer—an embassy secretary proceeding to his post at Vienna in Austria, a country with which the United States was then still at peace. To the astonishment of everyone on board, the English proposed to search this diplomatic officer also, despite the well-known immunity of men of his office, and when he protested they told him categorically that they had the consent of Dr. Page to the search, immunity or no immunity.

I believe that they told the truth. Page was apparently so insanely pro-English that he was quite willing to sacrifice the honor of his corps and of his country to British interests. But the Vienna secretary was not one to be victimized by such degraded bootlicking. Instead of yielding politely when the English officers invaded his cabin, he drew a revolver, laid it across the top of his trunk, and informed them that he would shoot the first one who touched his baggage. Meanwhile, he had sent for me, and for another journalist who happened to be aboard, to act as witnesses to the outrage and to his resistance. The English officers, facing such resolution, retreated forthwith and went ashore, where they apparently spent 24 hours in consultation with London. When they came out to

the ship again, it was to apologize to the bold diplomatic gun-man. The rest of us, of course, had to submit to the search. It was useless to protest, for Washington had already given the English free permission, as various blabbers have since revealed, to work their wicked will upon all ordinary Americans. When I got to Copenhagen I wrote an account of the episode and sent it home by mail. It never got to the United States; the English seized it on the high seas and suppressed it. Here again protest was useless. Some time before that, in 1915, when I complained to the American State Department of a similar violation of international law, I was solemnly advised to hire an English lawyer to press my case, and Assistant Secretary Adee even offered to suggest the name of a good one! A solemn fact! I have the correspondence still. I should add that the American secretary who repudiated the Page agreement at Falmouth bore the name of Stewart. I have never met him since, and do not know if he is still in the service. But he was a man of honor, and an American who respected both himself and his country.

The enormous multiplication of such episodes during the period 1914-1917 and the complete and ecstatic yielding to Anglomania afterward had the effect of very seriously compromising the honor of the United States, and, what is worse—at least from the usual American standpoint—of menacing the national safety. If the people of the United States could be brought to understand what happened at the so-called Disarmament Conference at Washington last Winter they would rise up in indignation and demand the impeachment of the chief American participants. It was a complete and overwhelming victory for English influence and English diplomacy. The United States went into the conference holding the balance of power in the Pacific, and in an excellent position to curb the extravagant and dangerous ambitions of Japan. More, it was

rapidly getting into a position to deal effectively with England also, and even with Japan and England in combination. It came out absolutely shorn of all that power. Once the disarmament plan agreed upon is executed, the nation will be absolutely helpless. It will be unable to challenge Japan on the Pacific and unable even to question England seriously on the Atlantic. If both powers were controlled and directed by archangels the situation would be bad enough; with the usual grade of English and Japanese politicians at the helm it will inevitably become intolerable. The hornswoggling of Uncle Sam was due primarily to the almost incredible incompetence of his representatives—consider, for example, the lethargic and ignorant Underwood as a diplomat pitted against Balfour, and young Teddy Roosevelt as a naval expert! But it was also due in large part to the stupendous development of the English machine for influencing and controlling public opinion in the United States—a machine first set up in 1914, but still working to vast effect. Its effectiveness was shown every day during the conference, but never more dramatically than when the question of submarines came up. At this point, it will be recalled, the French protested vigorously against the English proposal to prohibit submarines altogether—a proposal obviously grounded upon the fact that, once they were prohibited, it would be impossible for the French, or for any other nation, to make anything properly describable as a stand against the enormously superior English battle fleet. It must have been plain even to a blind man that the interests of the United States, in this dispute, were identical with the interests of France—that without submarines we'd be just as helpless against a British attack or a combined British and Japanese attack, as the French would be. But so efficient was the English press service in Washington that within twenty-four hours all the morons who represent the great American journals at Washington had been convinced that

the French caveat was barbarous, immoral and against God, and within a week the whole country had been inoculated with Francophobia, and soon afterward the principal French delegate, despairing of making any progress in other directions, went home. There he was ousted from office for his failure at the conference. That failure was due to the desertion of the United States, and the desertion of the United States was due to the control of American opinion by English propaganda.

I here speak by the book. I was in attendance on the conference, I had special sources of information, and I brought to the comprehension of them some experience in such chicaneries. The English absolutely ran the show. If they ever faltered, it was in the direction of demanding too much—of abandoning all pretense of fair and equitable bargaining. The American delegates threw the national security into the pot and what remained of the national honor; the English put in nothing whatever. As I say, the American people, if they understood what was done to them, would be full of indignation. But they are not likely to acquire that understanding. The machine is still working too smoothly; too many of the chief American newspapers revolve with its wheels. Even to discuss its operations begins to be subtly hazardous. For doing it here I shall be tackled in various oblique ways—usually on the plea that my motives are anti-patriotic. So far, indeed, has the thing gone that an American who protests against the sacrifice of American interests to English interests is accused of lack of patriotism! This is what we are paying for so long submitting to the unblushing colonialism of Dr. Wilson, Dr. Page and the rest of the Anglo-Saxon brotherhood. Two-thirds of the professional patriots who now rage and roar in the United States are violent Anglo-maniacs; the whole of American patriotism tends to become tinged by that weakness. That it is a weakness will appear upon that great day, perhaps not far distant, when the English and the

Japs essay to cash in their winnings at Washington.

IV

THE other evil that hangs over from the war is rather less-obvious. To get some measure of it I refer you to the discussion by Wilfred Scawen Blunt, in "My Diaries" (*Knopf*), of the permanent damage that was done to the English character by the Boer War. That damage was of a dual nature. On the one hand, the astounding demagoguery that went on during the war weaned the English away from their old leaders, who were, in the main, at least gentlemen, and set them to following a horde of ninth-rate commercial gents, Jew speculators and shady lawyers—Chamberlain, Isaacs, Bottomley and company. On the other hand, the gross criminality of the attack upon the Dutch republics obliterated the old English respect for law, and, above all, for fair play and common decency. Blunt says that the Englishman, by consenting to the invasion of the plain rights of the Boers, laid the foundations for even worse invasions of his own rights—that he had never been the free man since the war that he was before. In 1899 he still insisted, for example, upon exercising the right to free speech, even in the face of a national peril; by 1916 he had so far lost that old spirit that he submitted to the tyranny of the Defense of the Realm Act almost as supinely as the Americano, two years later, submitted to the terrorization of Palmer and Burleson, Lusk and Stevenson.

It seems to me that the permanent damage that the American people suffered during the late war, in spirit and character, was even more serious than that suffered by the English in the Boer War—that they descended to far lower depths of imbecility and poltroonery, and that the effects are far more brilliantly visible. Certainly, the old American liking for free discussion, general tolerance and a fair fight has gone by the board, and with it the old American

independence. The Americano of to-day is not a free individual, as his forefathers were; he is an ignominious goose-stepper. He is told what to do, what to think, what to feel, and nine times out of ten he obeys without question. It is impossible to imagine the frontier Americans of Jackson's day submitting to Prohibition; their descendants of today, when they oppose it at all, oppose it not with arms in their hands but with giggles. John Adams was overwhelmingly defeated in 1799 for oppressions so light that, during the Wilson administration, they would have seemed quite trivial. True enough, Wilson was eventually punished, too, but that punishment, in a very real sense, was furtive and sneaking; while he was in power only a small minority ventured to criticise and resist him. But even worse than this legacy of docility that he left behind him was a legacy of what deserves to be called, in plain language, national cowardice—a doctrine that it is unwise to fight until fighting becomes safe. The American share in the war, in truth, was not the share of a brave people. It was the share of a people who kept out so long as it was dangerous—and then fought, when it was safe, not in the manner of soldiers but in the manner of witch-burners and lynchers.

Let us consider briefly what the nation did. For a few months, at the start of the war, it viewed the struggle of nations idly and unintelligently, as a yokel might stare at a sword-swallower at a county fair. Then, seeing a chance to profit, it undertook with sudden alacrity the ghoulish office of *Kriegslieferant*. One of the contesting parties being disbarred, by the chances of war, from buying, it devoted its whole energies, for two years, to purveying to the other—at extortionate and outrageous rates. Meanwhile, it made every effort to aid its customer by lending him the cloak of its legal neutrality—that is, by demanding all the privileges of an honest neutral, and yet abusing those privileges daily. On the official side this neutrality was fraudulent from the

start, as everyone now knows; popularly it became more and more fraudulent as the debts of the swindled customer piled up, and it became more and more apparent—a fact diligently made known by his partisans—that they would be worthless if he failed to win. Then, in the end, covert aid was transformed into open aid. And under what gallant conditions! There stood a nation of 65,000,000 people which, without effective allies, had just closed two and a half years of homeric combat by completely defeating an enemy state of 135,000,000 and two lesser ones of more than 10,000,000 together, and now stood at bay, war-weary and half-starved, before a combination of at least 140,000,000. Upon this battle-scarred foe the Republic of 100,000,000 freemen now flung itself, thus lifting the odds in men to 4 to 1, and in materials to at least 40 to 1. And after a year and a half more of struggle it emerged triumphant—a knightly victor surely!

I have certainly no desire to under-rate the courage of the Americans who fought in that extremely one-sided war, many of them unwillingly, but nevertheless with soldierly spirit. But what could have been easier than the military task before them? Give a glance, for example, at the operations in the Argonne—now depicted by the generals who led them as almost comparable to the campaigns of Julius Cæsar. If you would know exactly what went on there, turn to page 206 of the English edition of "The Memoirs of the Crown Prince of Germany" (*Butterworth*). There the Crown Prince describes a visit he paid to his brother, Prince Eitel Friedrich, who commanded a division "at the eastern extremity of the Argonne." The Americans were present in almost unlimited number, and "had at their disposal an incredible quantity of heavy and very heavy artillery. Their preliminary bombardment greatly exceeded in intensity and heaviness anything we had known at Verdun or on the Somme." And what sort of

a German force opposed them? Eitel Friedrich's division, according to the Crown Prince, had been reduced to 500 rifles; the officers of the staff were fighting with their men in the first line. "The artillerymen were extremely fatigued, the guns were worn out, fresh ones were scarcely to be got from the works, the rations were insufficient and bad." . . . It is my contention that such fighting is not warfare in any intelligible sense; that its effect upon the men who engage in it is scarcely more damaging than its effect upon the people at home; that the public effort to convert it into an heroic and gallant business can have the sole consequence of degrading the public concept of gallantry. That degradation, it seems to me, was produced in the United States by the war. The American people came out of it victorious, but they also came out of it wholly purged of their old brave liking for fair odds, fair rules and fair play. They came out of it with far more bullyism in them than courage.

V

THE results are now before us: government by usurpation and tyranny, a complete collapse of national decency (*cf.* the so-called Chemical Foundation), the bitter and senseless persecution of minorities, Know-Nothingism, Ku Kluxism, terrorism and espionage. Would a nation so far departed from its old ideals of freedom, so completely purged of all the manly virtues, so submerged in baseness of spirit—would such a nation offer an effective resistance to a public enemy who was its equal, or perhaps its superior, in men and resources, and who came on with confidence, daring and resolution—say England supported by Japan on the one side and by her inevitable hordes of continental allies on the other, and with Germany, taught by our own evil example, in the rôle of dishonest neutral and *Kriegslieferant*? Against the best opinion of the chautauquas, of the American Legion and of the super-patriotic press, I presume to doubt it.

Are We a Nation of Low-Brows?

It is charged that the public is intellectually incompetent. Is this true? It is charged that the public is afraid of ideas, disinclined to think, unfriendly to culture. This is a serious matter. The facts should be faced frankly and honestly

Without Cultural Leadership

The main criticism, as we find it, is that the people support ventures that are unworthy, that represent no cultural standards. The public is fed on low-brow reading matter, low-brow movies, low-brow theatrical productions, low-brow music, low-brow newspapers, low-brow magazines. We think the criticism is unfair in that it does not recognize the fact that the public is without cultural leadership. Those who have the divine spark get off by themselves. We believe the public has never had a real chance, never had an opportunity to get acquainted with the great and the beautiful things of life. Given half a chance, the public will respond.

We believe there has been enough talk about the public's inferior taste.

The time has come to give the public an opportunity to find out something about philosophy, science and other higher things. And it must be done at a low price, because the average person's pocketbook is not fat. As it stands, the publishers charge about five dollars a volume, and then wonder why the people stand aloof.

We believe we have a way to find out if the people are interested in the deeper problems of life. And the first thing we decided was to fix a price that shall be within the reach of the person with the most slender purse.

We have selected a library of 25 books, which we are going to offer the public at an absurdly low price. We shall do this to find out if it is true that the public is not going to accept the better things when once given the

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Once the contents of the following 25 books are absorbed and digested we believe a person will be well on the road to culture. And by culture we do not mean something dry as dust, something incomprehensible to the average mind—genuine culture, like great sculpture, can be made to delight the common as well as the elect. The books listed below are all simple works and yet they are great—all great things are simple. They are serious works, of course, but we do not think the public will refuse to put its mind on serious topics. Here are the 25 books:

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Dialogues of Plato. This volume takes you into Plato's immortal circle.

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God may come naturally from observation of nature is explained in this volume.

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Thoughts of Pascal. Pascal thought a great deal about God and the Universe, and the origin and purpose of life.

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God: Known and Unknown. Samuel Butler. A really important work.

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